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THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE OF MARY'S MERIT



IN the encyclical letter, *Ad Diem Illum*, written on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Saint Pius X penned a passage which has evoked much discussion among mariologists in Europe:

Since she surpasses all creatures in sanctity, and in union with Christ, and since she was chosen by Christ to be His associate in the work of human salvation, *she has merited for us congruously, as they say, what Christ has merited for us condignly.*¹

Most theologians do not hesitate to interpret his words, "*de congruo, ut aiunt*," as leaving the question of Mary's merit open to theological study. It is asked: does the merit *de congruo* accurately qualify her merit as spiritual Mother of

¹ February 2, 1904. My italics.

all men, as Co-redemptrix and as Mediatrix of all grace? In 1951 those who maintain this qualification of Marian merit inadequate and argue for relative condignity were described as "comparatively small in number and their spirit feeble."² In reality the controversy in Europe has assumed proportions which American mariologists have failed to recognize. More and more theologians³ are becoming adherents of this school as the arguments presented cease to be "tissue-thin" and become more demonstrative and convincing.

It is the purpose of this article to trace the gradual evolution of opinions as to the relative condignity of Mary's social merit, to present the thought of only those who have been most articulate and who have contributed in a great measure to the controversy by evoking a storm of approval or disapproval. It is hoped that it may arouse a similar ferment of thought in mariological circles in America, thereby furthering Marian investigation and study.

² Joseph A. Moynahan, "Our Lady's Merit *de Congruo* according to Pope Pius X," *Marian Studies*, II (1951), 154.

³ Cf. J. A. Aldama, S. J., S. Gonzalez, J. Solano, *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, III (Madrid, 1953), 436; M. Llamera, O. P., "El mérito maternal corredentivo de María," *Estudios Marianos*, XI (1951), 83-140; M. Cuervo, O. P., "La Virgen María Mediadora de Gracia," *La Ciencia Tomista*, LXXVII (1950), 457-477; C. Balić, O. F. M., "Die sekundäre Mittlerschaft der Gottesmutter," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit*, IV (1937), 1-22; J. M. Bover, S. J., *María Mediadora universal* (Madrid, 1946); P. Grabić, O. F. M., "Theologicae considerationes de natura Mediationis B. M. Virginis" in *Collectanea Franciscana Slavica* (Sibenici, 1940); L. Colomer, O. F. M., *La Virgen María* (Barcelona, 1935); "Cooperación meritoria de la Virgen a la Redención," *Estudios Marianos*, II (1943), 155-177; E. Sauras, O. P., "La muerte de María y la gracia de la Corredención," *ibid.*, IX (1950), 206; Basilio de San Pablo, C. P., "Jerarquía entre los elementos formales . . . de nuestra reparación," *ibid.*, II (1943), 271-318; F. Vacas, O. P., "El mérito de María Corredentora no es mérito de congruo," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, XVIII (1940), 598-605; "María Corredentora pudo merecer *de condigno ex condignitate*," *ibid.*, pp. 719-729; García Garcés, *Mater Corredemptrix* (Turin, 1940), p. 209 and "Orientaciones mariológicas," *Estudios Marianos*, I (1942), 355-387; A. Fernández, O. P., "De Mediatione Beatae Virginis secundum doctrinam Divi Thomae," *La Ciencia Tomista*, XXXVIII (1928), 145-170. For J. Bittremieux and C. Friethoff, O. P., cf. J. Bittremieux, "Recensiones," *Marianum*, XI (1949), 347.

1. NEED FOR CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

There have been many stormy periods in the history of dogma occasioned by a misconception of terms. Father Narciso García Garcés, C. M. F., first President of the Academia de Estudios Marianos in Spain, judges the present division of merit into condign and congruous to be imperfect,⁴ and frankly says that the problem of the relative condignity of Mary's social merit is a typical dispute arising from deficient terminology.⁵ The Jesuit, Bover, likewise criticizes the nomenclature of Mary's merit, believing that the problem of the condignity or congruity of Mary's merits has become lamentably embroiled through a deficiency of appropriate terms and that it is in large part a question more verbal than real. He would propose *superdigno* for the merit of Christ, *digno* for that of Mary, and *infradigno* for that of the rest of men.⁶ Keuppens,⁷ Druwé,⁸ and Dillenschneider⁹ would use the term *supercongruo*.

However, it was Monsignor Joseph Lebon of Louvain who first raised a furor by qualifying her merit as *de condigno*.¹⁰ Among others who have had a large following,¹¹ but who conceive her merit as condign in a different sense from Lebon's, are Father Manuel Cuervo, O. P., of the Pontifical University of Salamanca, using the term of *de condigno ex condignitate*, and Father Marceliano Llamera, O. P., Professor at the Estudio General of the Province of Aragon, preferring *condigno maternal*.

⁴ Art. cit. in *Estudios Marianos*, I, 379.

⁵ Cf. *Mater Corredemptrix*, p. 197.

⁶ Op. cit., pp. 313, 316-317.

⁷ *Mariologiae Compendium* (Antwerp, 1938), n. 309.

⁸ "La médiation universelle de Marie" in *Maria: Études sur la Sainte Vierge* (ed. H. du Manoir), I (Paris, 1949), 535, n. 578; "Echange de vues à la suite du rapport du R. P. Philippon," *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Études Mariales*, II (1936), 247.

⁹ *Marie au service de notre rédemption* (Haguenau, 1947), p. 401.

¹⁰ "La bienheureuse Vierge Marie Médiatrice de toutes les grâces," *La Vie diocésaine de Malines*, X (1921), 257-267; 431-444; "Comment je conçois, j'établie et je défends la doctrine de la médiation mariale," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, XVI (1939), 655-744.

¹¹ Cf. op. cit., *supra*, n. 3.

It has been a common theological axiom since the seventeenth century that Mary merited for others congruously.¹² Inasmuch as this was a general opinion, Pope St. Pius X wrote that she merited *de congruo* "ut aiunt." In these words of the Holy Father, Lebon, Cuervo and others have seen a statement of the existence of her merit, but maintain that as to the nature of this merit the Pope left the question to the determination of theologians. Cuervo denies that one may speak of a "*communis traditio et communis theologorum sententia*" in a matter on which most theologians are agreed is yet to be elaborated theologically.¹³

2. MERIT

As commonly defined, merit is the property of a good work which entitles the doer to a reward from him in whose service the work is done. It is the right to a just recompense which is had by a good human act insofar as it is ordained to God, the end of man, and is in conformity with His will.¹⁴ Two kinds of merit may be distinguished. When there is total adequation, that is, between the dignity of the one meriting and the one

¹² A few theologians in the seventeenth century qualified Mary's merit as *de condigno*, but these were in the minority: Martínez de Ripalda, S. J., Christophorus de Vega, S. J., Carlos del Moral, O. F. M., Thomas F. Urrutigoyti, O. F. M., Angelus Vulpes, O. F. M. and the Mercedarian, Sylvester de Saavedra. According to Father Juniper Carol, O. F. M. in his *De Corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae Disquisitio positiva* (Vatican City, 1950), p. 339, the first to elaborate *ex professo* on the condignity of Mary's merit was Carlos de Moral in his *Fons illimis theologiae scoticae marianae* (Madrid, 1730) when he writes: "Constat . . . non dissonare doctrinae Sanctorum Patrum nec sacrae theologiae, quin potius videri conforme principiis theologicis receptis extra scholam nostram Scoticam, Deiparam cooperatam fuisse cum Filio actibus meritoriis *de condigno* ad salutem hominum, gratiam et gloriam angelorum, meritis quidem dependentibus a meritis Filii."

¹³ Cf. Cuervo's reply to Father Gabriele Roschini, O. S. M. in "Sobre el mérito corredentivo de María," *Estudios Marianos*, I (1942), 336. Elsewhere he writes that the Pope in qualifying Mary's merit as congruous, relies upon the opinion, then current, of theologians but leaves to them the responsibility for such a denomination. With the words, "*ut aiunt*," he does not approve nor sanction such a denomination authoritatively as being exact, but only refers to it as the minimum expression of Mary's merit. Cf. *art. cit.* in *La Ciencia Tomista*, LXXVII, 465-466.

¹⁴ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 21, aa. 3 and 4; q. 114, a. 1.

rewarding as well as between the work and the reward, there is absolute condign merit. If there is a proportion only between the work and the reward, there is relative condign merit (or of condignity—*secundum quid*). If the intrinsic proportion between the service and the recompense is lacking and nevertheless, a reward is given not in justice but only on the grounds of equity or friendship, there is congruous merit.

To Christ alone belongs strict condign merit. His is the dignity of a God-Man. Inasmuch as His acts were those of a Divine Person and of One Who is Head of the human race, He merited in strict justice both for Himself and for others. Between God and creatures, however, there can be no relation of strict justice, but only of a certain proportion.¹⁵ Although there is inadequation in man's works between the dignity of the one rewarding and the one meriting, these works may become proportionate to the reward as they proceed from the divine motion of grace which is the seed of eternal life which God has promised to those who do His will. Relative condign merit for man is utterly unintelligible without a divine ordination of his works to what God wishes to give him as a reward.¹⁶ In relative condign merit the divine ordination is a true guarantee of condignity between the meritorious action and the reward which is the *terminus operis*.¹⁷ The meritorious act proceeding from sanctifying grace, with the motion of the Holy Spirit, is proportionate to the reward to which it is ordained by God as to its connatural term. Between the merit and the reward there is true justice but not absolute justice inasmuch as there is an infinite disproportion in dignity between God and finite man. However, the meritorious work derives its proportionality or *condignitas* from the quasi-divine dignity of adoptive sonship which is imparted to the just man and his works of sanctifying grace and from the free acceptance and gratuitous promise of God.

Condign merit may be social or personal. In social condign merit the grace has a divinely intrinsic ordination to the divine

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 114, a. 1 c.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, a. 5 c.

life of others as to a proportioned, connatural reward. Inasmuch as Christ was constituted Head of the human race to regenerate men and to lead them to salvation, His grace was divinely ordained to merit for all the members of the Mystical Body, and His merit was superabundantly *social* condign.

The just man has a personal condign merit because his grace is divinely ordered to his own increase of sanctifying grace, to eternal life, and to an increase of heavenly glory. This personal condign merit is incommunicable and does not include his first grace nor the grace of final perseverance. It is true that he may merit for others whatever he may merit for himself, but this *social* merit is *congruous*, that is, founded not on justice but on the rights of friendship or fittingness. It is this kind of merit which has been accorded to Mary in the past by most theologians who have not recognized any condignity in social merit in the simple members of the Mystical Body. At the present time the one disputed case among mariologists is that of the Mother of God.

3. CONTROVERSY BEGINS WITH THE OPINIONS OF MONSIGNOR JOSEPH LEBON

In 1921 Lebon of Louvain made the first attempt to present Mary's social merit as condign. He waited eighteen years for the storm of protest to subside, and then after due consideration calmly wrote a further defense of his position.¹⁸ He differs from other theologians, who advocate for the Mother of God relative social condign merit, by restricting this to one phase only, the maternal offering of the life of her Son. According to Lebon, Mary's activity during her mortal life in contradistinction to that of Christ was not entirely and immediately ordered to the Redemption of men. By those acts which proceeded from her official function as Associate with Christ, she cooperated immediately in the acquisition of redemptive merit; by those which did not proceed from this function, Mary realized her personal, supernatural end and augmented

¹⁸ Cf. *supra*, note 10.

her sanctifying grace. As an unofficial person Mary, like the other members of the Mystical Body, merited condignly her own personal sanctification and congruously for others. However, by the divine will she had an official role in the Passion, cooperating immediately in the objective Redemption by virtue of a singular and unique association which makes of Christ and Mary "*un principe total de salut*,"¹⁹ in the divine plan for the restoration of the human race.

Lebon believes that Mary, as an official person, cooperated immediately in the acquisition of redemptive merit when she voluntarily renounced her *maternal rights* over the life of her Victim-Son. It is God Who in His sovereign liberty fixed the ensemble and details of the Redemption, to Whom the immolation was made, Who accepted it and before Whom redemptive merit has its existence. In decreeing that Jesus have human life through a real birth from a true mother to whom maternity conferred over her Son the rights which all mothers have, God bound Himself as regards the realization of this divine ordination to accept as redemptively meritorious the sacrifice of this human life, only by the voluntary renunciation of all real rights, the personal rights of Jesus and the maternal rights of Mary.²⁰ This merit Lebon qualifies as condign:

On Calvary . . . there are not two victims nor two sacrifices, nor consequently, two redemptive merits, but a unique sacrifice of a single victim upon which two have rights which they freely renounce, thus associating themselves in the acquisition of merit which, in its way, is really that of each. The redemptive merit of the cross is incontestably a merit properly called *de condigno*. If, by the function which is assigned to her in the divine plan, Mary is officially associated in the acquisition of this unique merit, in the act which constitutes this acquisition, it is indeed by a merit, or

¹⁹ *Art. cit.*, *Ephem. Theol. Lovan.*, XVI (1939), 671-673.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 701-702. In his insistence on the *materna in Filium iura* Lebon refers to the letter of Pope Benedict XV, *Inter Sodalicia* (March 22, 1918): "She suffered with her suffering and dying Son, and almost died with Him: and for the salvation of men she surrendered her rights and privileges of mother over her Son and, so far as it pertained to her, sacrificed her Son to placate the justice of God—all this in such a manner that it can truly be said that together with Christ she redeemed the human race." See also *art. cit.*, 672-674, and 695-702.

if you will, by a co-merit *de condigno* that she is associated and cooperates in the work of the salvation of humanity.²¹

Lebon foresees the next difficulty: he has claimed that Mary's co-merit is *condign*; however, theologians have posited as an indispensable condition for merit *de condigno* the possession of sanctifying grace, which alone establishes an equality between the work of man and the recompense of eternal life. Have they forgotten, he queries, that there is someone,

the Mother of the Redeemer, who has a right as real as that of the Redeemer, although of a different nature, to offer to God an object of supreme and infinite value, an object certainly *equivalent to the reward of eternal life*, i. e. the human life of One Who is both God and Man? ²²

Moreover, Lebon theorizes, theologians who have elaborated treatises on merit, and even St. Thomas in laying down the principles of merit, have envisaged only the case of the ordinary man, taken as a type of fallen humanity. In the economy of Redemption Mary is singular. Her mode of redemption in her private role is more sublime, being preserved from that sin from which others must be purified. Her part in the divine plan of Redemption further isolates her from the simple members of the Mystical Body. No other like her is placed with Christ between God and the world; no other can assert real rights over the human life of the Savior, and by abandoning them to the glory of the Father, place his own in the redemptive immolation and cooperate with Christ.²³

Saint Thomas conceived of sanctifying grace as bridging the gap between the disproportion of nature and the gift of eternal life. Had he considered the Mother of God, charged by the divine will to fulfill the official function of being the associate of Christ in the Redemption, would not the Holy Doctor admit that this very function elevates the principle of the official act of Mary's cooperation to the proportion of the gift of eternal life for men and to the merit of this good? Lebon queries further:

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 674-675.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 711.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 716.

Does it not depend also on the divine preordination that the act of the official function which God's plan assigns to Mary be ordained to co-redemptive merit and that the virtue, the principle of this act be, as to quality, the official dignity of the Virgin, proportioned to this good and merit? If it pertains to the disposition of Divine Providence, as St. Thomas says, that nothing acts beyond its power, does it not belong to the disposition of the same Providence that every being receives the power or the complement of virtue which places it in proportion to the end of the function assigned by God Himself for its activity?²⁴

According to Lebon, it is not sanctifying grace that makes Mary capable of exercising efficaciously her function of Co-redemptrix. If this were so, why would it not confer on other men the same capacity? It is the divine Maternity. As a private person she has been redeemed and sanctified by the grace of the Savior; but as Co-redemptrix and in her official role she is not under the influence of the grace of Christ:

Mary holds the divine Maternity purely and simply from the divine will, from the absolutely gratuitous benevolence of God. It was not conferred upon the Virgin like her sanctifying grace in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race. Mary herself has not truly merited her dignity of Mother of God, of Mother of the Redeemer. As a work absolutely gratuitous of the wisdom and bounty of God, the privilege of the divine Maternity depends upon no merit, is the fruit of no merit whatsoever.²⁵

This theory in which the divine Maternity is made the immediate principle of the official association of the Co-redemptrix with the Redeemer and of her cooperation in the work of salvation safeguards the theological axiom: "*principium meriti non cadit sub merito.*"²⁶

Theologians treat with great respect Lebon's conception of Mary's merit, but many object when he makes her merit independent of that of Christ, coordinate rather than subordinate to His merit. Father Clément Dillenschneider, C. SS. R., aptly expresses the opinion of other critics when he writes:

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 718.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 713-714.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

If one subtracts the social merit of Mary in our Redemption *in actu primo* from the *emprise* of the merit of Jesus, the Redeemer, one deprives the redemptive activity of the Son of God of its most splendid title to glory. No, Mary is subordinate to her redeeming Son, and so much the more sublimely redeemed as she is His universal Associate in the restoration of the human race.²⁷

Father M. Llamera, O. P., agrees with Lebon that the divine Maternity is the foundation of her soteriological mission but affirms that the formal principle of her co-redemptive function is not her divine Maternity, but her fullness of grace which her mission of the divine and spiritual Maternity demands. Moreover, if the co-redemptive grace were independent of the grace of Christ, Mary would be a Redemptrix, not Co-redemptrix, and Christ would not be the only Mediator and Redeemer.²⁸ Lebon limits unduly Mary's official co-redemptive function and the condignity of her merit to the co-immolation of Calvary. The sacrifice of Calvary is not the only redemptive merit of Jesus nor the only co-redemptive merit of Mary.²⁹

4. THEORY OF MARY'S CO-CAPITAL GRACE

Seven years after Lebon opened the controversy on Mary's condign merit, Father A. Fernández, O. P., took up the same thesis, but from a different point of view. According to his conception, the actions of Christ were meritorious for us *de condigno* inasmuch as the habitual grace of Christ was a capital grace and a principle of merit for all by virtue of the divine decree which ordains this merit for the redemption of men. The same divine decree touches the Mother of God whose

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, 365-366. Canon George D. Smith stresses the same: "As Adam is the head of the whole human race according to nature, so that even the body of Eve was formed from him, so the merits of Christ are the source of all grace, including the grace of Mary, the second 'Eve.'" Cf. *Mary's Part in Our Redemption* (New York, 1938), p. 90.

²⁸ *Art. cit.*, p. 104.

²⁹ According to Llamera, Mary's entire maternal life, in dependence upon the sacrifice of Calvary, is condignly meritorious of our salvation. Her full grace was ordained by God and by her Maternity, not only to her own sanctification, but to the regeneration of all men. Her merit was not only *personal* condign, but *social* condign. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

actions were meritorious *de condigno*, "*quia praedestinata est ut vere esset mater Christi, qui est caput et redemptor, ei divinitus fuit indissolubiliter associata in officio redemptionis perficiendo, et consequenter CONCAPUT et corredemptrix est constituta.*"³⁰

The theory of Fernández has been severely criticized by theologians, and rejected by many without further consideration. Llamera judges his argumentation valid, but that in his attribution of co-headship to the Mother of God he has erred in terminology:

If it is certain that the Headship is an attribute which alone pertains fully to Christ, it is also certain that the fullness of Mary's grace is a participation of the capital grace and of its ends and salvific virtualities, among which is that of meriting and co-meriting our salvation. The conception and denomination of this grace must be improved, . . . but it is not fitting to deny its meritorious efficacy in respect to regenerative, universal grace which is what Fernández pretends to prove and really proves.³¹

5. THEORY OF MARY'S MERIT *condigno ex condignitate*

The Salamanca School is represented by Father Manuel Cuervo, O.P., who looks with disfavor at any suggestion of Mary as "*Concaput*," but continues the controversy by finding a possibility of social condign merit in a mere creature, affirmed by St. Thomas in his answer to the question whether Christ could communicate to ministers the power of excellence which He has in the sacraments, which power carries with it as its first prerogative, the condign merit of grace acknowledged by most theologians to be *condigno ex condignitate*.³² The powers

³⁰ *Art. cit.*, *La Ciencia Tomista*, XXXVIII (1928), 150 ff. He explains further: "Quid ergo si B. Virgo, hoc modo consociata Christo, communicet cum eo in ratione merendi? Per hoc quod B. Virgo praedestinata est mater Christi et plenitudine gratiarum cumulata ut esset dignissima auxiliatrix redemptionis, a Deo missionem et ordinationem accepit, ut cum Christo ad salutem concurreret et consequenter id a Deo consecuta est per operationem suam, quasi mercedem, ad quod Deus et virtutem operandi deputavit." *Ibid.*

³¹ *Art. cit.*, p. 106.

³² "La Virgen María Mediadora de Gracia," *La Ciencia Tomista*, LXXVII (1950), 466-467; "Sobre el mérito corredentivo de María," *Estudios Marianos*, I (1942), pp. 328 ff.

admitted by St. Thomas³³ are more tremendous than those involved in Marian mediation.

Cuervo gives three conditions which have been affixed for the viability of condign merit in a pure creature with respect to others: moral representation of the human race, most perfect grace, and the divine, universal ordination to the merit of the same for all.³⁴ As to the first condition, Cuervo finds it completely realized in Mary under titles of Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix of men:

What would it mean to be universal Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix if she did not have the representation of all men as to the effects of mediation and Co-redemption? . . . The ancient theologians used to say that the creature to whom was conceded a prerogative so singular as to merit the grace for all the rest would be constituted head of the human race, a thing which does not pertain to Mary. But this they affirmed by reason of the moral representation of all for the very effects of merit. If then the question of Marian mediation would have been posed and discussed in today's terminology, they would likewise have said that being Mediatrix with Jesus Christ for all men sufficed.³⁵

As to her plenitude of grace all theologians are agreed. St. Thomas affirms that her grace is sufficient to save the entire human race.³⁶ Cuervo adds that being associated in the hypo-

³³ According to St. Thomas, Christ could communicate to ministers the power of excellence which belongs to Him as man: namely, "by giving them such a fulness of grace,—that their merits would conduce to the sacramental effect,—that by the invocation of their names, the sacraments would be sanctified;—and that they themselves might institute sacraments, and by their mere will confer the sacramental effect without observing the sacramental rite." Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 4 c. Cuervo also recalls the teaching of John of St. Thomas that there is no repugnance in the idea that one man may merit condignly for another the first grace, cf. III, q. 1, dist. 1a. a. 2, n. 72 cited by Cuervo in *La Ciencia Tomista*, LXXVII, 467. He points out that Gonet, echoing the doctrine of other Thomists, teaches the same, cf. *Tract. de justificatione et merito*, disp. 2, a. 7, conclus. 3, cited by Cuervo (*ibid.*) who maintains that the divine ordination required by Gonet is also linked to the grace of the universal Mediatrix of the human race, and that without it her universal mediation cannot be conceived.

³⁴ *Art. cit.* in *Estudios Marianos*, I, 328.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 329-330.

³⁶ St. Thomas writes: "Magnum est enim in quolibet sancto, quod habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed quando haberet tantum, quod

static order and in the very end of the Incarnation in union with Jesus Christ, she received from God grace adapted, not only to be the worthy Mother of God, but also to the realization of that end which consists precisely in the acquisition of grace for all.³⁷

The third condition of intrinsic ordination is likewise fulfilled in Mary:

. . . the intrinsic ordination of grace to the merit of the same for all of us, flows from the very principle of our salvation, as Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix with Him of all mankind. To each one is given the grace according to that to which he is elected. And so as the grace of Jesus Christ has an intrinsic order to the merit of the same for all mankind, insofar as He is the Redeemer and Mediator of all men, so also that of Mary, universal Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix with Jesus Christ of all of us.³⁸

According to the professor of Salamanca, nothing is lacking for Mary to have merited grace *ex condignitate*. However, he is particularly insistent that there is a precise distinction between Mary's grace and that of Christ inasmuch as it is not a capital grace, and between hers and men's by reason of its intrinsic ordination to the merit of all:

Our condign merits and those of Mary differ in that ours are referred only to the increase of grace in ourselves and to the attainment of eternal life; besides this, those of Mary have for their object the attainment itself of grace for the human race by an intrinsic ordination different in her and in us. Christ's merit differs in that His is *ex toto rigore justitiae* and Mary's only *ex condignitate* which is obtained in virtue of the grace received from Him.³⁹

Father G. Roschini, O.S.M., has challenged Cuervo on several scores: the first is that there is required an "*aequiva-*

sufficeret ad salutem omnium hominum de mundo, hoc esset maximum, et hoc est in Christo et in B. Virgine" (Opusc. VIII). Italics by Cuervo, *loc. cit.*

³⁷ "La cooperación de María en el misterio de nuestra salud," *Estudios Marianos*, II (1943), 137-138; *La Ciencia Tomista*, LVII, 215-217.

³⁸ *Art. cit.* in *Estudios Marianos*, I, 330-331.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

lencia seu operis proportio intrinseca cum praemio."⁴⁰ Father Cuervo answers this by saying that when the three conditions for condign merit are fulfilled, there is this equivalence. Further equivalence would be redundancy, condign merit or the equivalence between the merit and the reward of grace, being the conditioned and not the condition.⁴¹

Roschini argues that capital grace is necessary.⁴² Cuervo refuses to agree that this is a necessary condition:

Capital grace in concept implies, among other things, two things very distinct from each other: a) the notion of fontal origin of the grace; and b) universal representation as to satisfaction and merit of the same for all, by means of the intrinsic ordination to these ends. These two are separable, the second can be had without the first, but not vice versa. And this is precisely the case of the Mediatrix. The grace of Jesus Christ is capital because it has these two formalities together. On the other hand, inasmuch as Mary's is wholly derived and a participation of that of Christ, it would be absurd to call her the head of the Mystical Body, it being proper to her, as to the participation of her grace, to be only a member. But at the same time, it would be a very serious error, which would destroy the very titles which we try to attribute to her, to conceive her as a simple member of this Body, although the principal one.⁴³

This is precisely Roschini's difficulty, charges Cuervo, and this is to deny to her the role of Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix:

Associated with Jesus Christ in the very end of the Incarnation of the Word, and elevated by God to constitute with Christ a single principle of our salvation, together with her Son she represents us all as to the attainment of eternal life. Therefore, her grace has also an intrinsic-divine ordination to satisfaction and to the merit of the grace of all of us. To think otherwise would be equivalent to destroying the very title of Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix of men and to erase the distinction which ought to exist between her and us.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ "Utrum meritum corredemptivum Deiparae appellari possit de condigno," *Marianum*, III (1941), 244.

⁴¹ *Estudios Marianos*, I, 332-333.

⁴² *Art. cit.*, p. 243.

⁴³ *Estudios Marianos*, I, 334.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Moreover, if one admits that the grace with which God enriched her must be proportioned to the very sublime ends for which He chose her, which grace, according to the current opinion of theologians, surpasses that of all the members taken together in the Mystical Body, what is lacking, Cuervo asks for her to have merited condignly grace for all, and for her merit to have true equivalence with that of the members of the Mystical Body?

Cuervo's theory is appraised by Father Llamera, O. P., as "firme y eficaz," but the latter suggests that the titles of Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix are consequent and derived rather than primary and constitutive of her being. Hence they do not convey the full significance of her proper position and her relation to the Son of God and to men. A more unitary and homogeneous conception which communicates a greater coherence to her entire soteriological cooperation is a maternal one.⁴⁵

6. MARY'S MERIT AS MATERNAL CONDIGN

Father Llamera, O. P., would designate Mary's co-redemptive merit, not as social, but as maternal.⁴⁶ He has penetrated deeply into the words of Pope St. Pius X:

Now the Blessed Virgin did not conceive the eternal Son of God merely in order that He might be made man, taking His human nature from her, but also in order that by means of the nature assumed from her He might be the Redeemer of men. For which reason the angel said to the shepherds: *For this day, is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* Wherefore in the same holy bosom of His most chaste Mother, Christ took to Himself flesh, and united to Himself the spiritual body formed by those who were to believe in Him. Hence Mary, carrying the Savior within her, may be said to have also carried all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior.⁴⁷

Mary's maternal action is specified not only by the human generation of the Word, but by His Headship, that is, by the

⁴⁵ *Art. cit.* in *Estudios Marianos*, XI, 107.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ad Diem Illum*, February 2, 1904.

vivifying union of Christ with the human race. Her spiritual Maternity receives its proper nature, efficiency, and extension from the Headship of Christ. Its end is the Headship itself or the regeneration of men in Christ, the formation of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Llamera analogizes:

As the Hypostatic Union conditions the divine Maternity, the Headship conditions the spiritual Maternity; that is, as the divine Maternity depends for its existence, nature and transcendence on the Hypostatic Union, the spiritual Maternity depends for its existence, nature and transcendence on the Headship of Christ.⁴⁸

What the Hypostatic Union and the Headship are to Christ, the divine and spiritual Maternity are to Mary. The salvific action of Mary in cooperation with Christ is the actuation of her spiritual Maternity proceeding from the divine Maternity, as that of Christ is the actuation of His Headship proceeding from the Hypostatic Union. As the grace of Christ is called *capital* grace, so the grace of Mary is and may be called *maternal* grace.

It is his thesis that the Mother of God and of men in her maternal cooperation with Christ merited "*con mérito condigno o ex condignitate*" universal grace for the human race. He reasons in the following simple syllogism:

The spiritual Maternity or maternal grace is to the co-redemptive merit of Mary what the Headship or capital grace is to the redemptive merit of Christ. But by virtue of His Headship Christ merited *de condigno* (absolutely) grace for the human race. Therefore, Mary by virtue of her spiritual Maternity, co-merits *de condigno* (*ex condignitate*) grace for mankind.⁴⁹

His argument in respect to merit has its justification in the soteriological analogy of the Headship and the spiritual Maternity, inasmuch as the Maternity, dependent upon and subordinate to the Headship, is to the consoteriological mission of

⁴⁸ *Estudios Marianos*, XI, 108.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Mary what the Headship is to the soteriological mission of Christ.⁵⁰

It is admitted that Christ by virtue of the Headship merits condignly for the human race. Does it follow from this that the Mother of God by virtue of her spiritual Maternity also merits condignly? Why not congruously? Llamera answers that the end of the spiritual Maternity is the same as that of the Headship: the divine regeneration of men. To this end as to a proportioned reward both are ordained, although each in its own manner: the Headship with its proper grace and infinite merit by reason of the infinitude of the Person of Christ; the Maternity with the grace received from Christ and with finite merit, in virtue of the finiteness of Mary's person. The reward is, then, materially the same, inasmuch as the spiritual Maternity cannot have one different from that of the Headship; but formally, distinct, because it is not *equally* merited by the Headship and the Maternity. Despite this inequality there is condignity of merit for both, but with a different condignity. That of the Headship is absolute and superabundant, and that of the Maternity is relative. Why is that of the Maternity also condign? Because the regeneration of humanity in which that reward consists is its divine and connatural *razón de ser*: and consequently, carries with it a capacity adequate for its attainment.⁵¹

Capital grace by its plenitude, representation and universal ordination to all the members of Christ is condignly meritorious of grace. Theologians have taught that a pure creature could

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* To the charge that the analogy between the Headship and the spiritual Maternity is aprioristic, Llamera answers that it is founded on divine predestination in the Incarnation and Passion. It is realized historically at the Incarnation and consummated on Calvary. There, He, the Head of humanity, dies for the regeneration of His members, she as the Mother of men, "*conmuriendo*" for the regeneration of her children. In the words of Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*: ". . . always most intimately united with her Son, as another Eve she offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam sin-stained by his fall, and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who corporally was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became spiritually the mother of all His members." *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

not merit condignly grace for the human race without a universal Headship. Llamera asserts that they were right insofar as they thought that without a grace similar to the capital grace a condign, universal, regenerative merit was inconceivable. However, Mary's maternal grace is similar to capital grace and derived from it. Participation in the Headship is not in her a Headship like that of Christ. It is her spiritual Maternity which gives her the capacity for co-redemptive co-merit as the Headship does to Christ for redemptive merit, both condignly, but with the same difference in condignity as there is a difference between the two.⁵²

Like Cuervo, Llamera shows that the conditions of meritorious condignity are fulfilled in Mary: perfection or plenitude of grace, universal representation or the virtual inclusion of our own in her grace, and the divine intrinsic ordination of Mary's grace to the acquisition of ours. Theologians accept the dictum of St. Thomas that God gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen him.⁵³ One necessarily concludes that Mary's perfection of grace corresponded to her mission of Mother of God and of men. Does not this capacity for the divine and spiritual Maternity carry with it the condignity of her co-redemptive merit? How fitting would it be for her to be the Mother of men if she did not possess sufficient grace to acquire that which makes us her children? Fitness for the spiritual Maternity demands in the grace a condign or adequate meritorious virtuality for universal regeneration.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Thomistic axiom that the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part which it has in the effect of that principle, is fully verified in her. From this St. Thomas deduced that inasmuch as the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity, because He received His human nature for her, it was due to her to receive a greater fullness of grace than others.⁵⁵ If "of His fullness we have all received," through her maternal union there flows into Mary such a full-

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 27, a. 5, ad 1.

⁵⁴ *Estudios Marianos*, XI, 118.

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, III, q. 27, a. 5 c.

ness of grace that it is a living likeness of capital grace and gives her the capacity for the Maternity of all grace. Thus the first condition for condign merit is fulfilled "*con creces!*"⁵⁶

Although this perfection of grace is a reasonable indication for the second condition of condignity, it would not in itself be an authentic argument for universal representation. Mary is not just a virgin full of grace; her grace is a "*gracia llena maternal,*" and so is linked vitally with the grace of all men. The Maternity confers on Mary the universal representation of the human race which she must regenerate. St. Thomas affirms that at the Annunciation her consent was besought in lieu of that of the entire human nature;⁵⁷ likewise, he teaches that she effected the solidarity of the Word with the human race by conferring on Him maternally the nature of Adam.⁵⁸ Llamera then reasons:

The universal Mother who, containing maternally in herself all humanity, had a solidarity with it, makes it have a solidarity with her Son, and represents it together with Him before God. There is no doubt that her spiritual Maternity, in association with the Headship of Christ, confers upon her a public personality, a universal representation and responsibility. Is she not recognized as the New Eve because of her maternal association with Christ? And does not Eve represent, subordinately to and dependently on Adam, all those who were to be her children?⁵⁹

The third condition of condign merit, universal ordination, follows naturally on the proof of universal representation. If there is not this universal ordination, her spiritual Maternity is void of meaning:

What does a maternal life signify that is not ordered to the life of the children? It is not necessary to have recourse to another principle nor educe other titles in order to persuade one of the social ordination of Mary's grace. Her grace was ordained vitally to ours by its essential maternity.⁶⁰

She is the New Eve, Mother of all those living with a new divine life. To this life her own life is essentially ordered.

⁵⁶ *Estudios Marianos*, XI, 118-119.

⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, III, q. 30, a. 1 c.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 31, aa. 6 and 7.

⁵⁹ *Art. cit.*, p. 120.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

As to the extrinsic ordination which makes official, so to speak, the intrinsic social ordination of her grace, the question is simply answered: Who but God predestined her to be a Mother, Who but God filled her with grace, and imprinted on her grace a connatural ordination to the universal regeneration of all men?

Mary is universal Mother because she was predestined for the very end of the Incarnation, which is the regeneration of men. This maternal destiny imposes upon her the mission of gaining or winning the life of men as the Mother Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix in faithful and constant association and collaboration with Jesus, Head, Mediator and universal Redeemer.⁶¹

God made her a Mother to regenerate us, and, asks Llamera, does one still ask for the divine credentials which authorize her maternal mission? No further divine ordination is needed than the maternal mission for which she was predestined, than the maternal condition which was conferred on her, than the maternal grace with which she co-merits all grace.⁶²

Llamera concludes that by virtue of her maternal grace, Mary, in union with and in dependence on Jesus, co-merits condignly universal grace for the human race. Universal regenerative grace is an adequate or just reward of Mary's maternal merit. God has not made her inferior nor even equal but superior to her maternal redemptive mission. The Maternity of Mary and the congruity of her merit are incompatible. For if the condignity of her merit comes from the perfection, the solidarity, social ordination of her grace, congruity would result from insufficiency, from non-solidarity, and from the social inordination of her grace. But if her grace is of itself insufficient in order to gain ours, if it does not contain it maternally, if it is not maternally ordered to it, then how can Mary be our Mother, our true and worthy Mother? The truth of the divine and spiritual Maternity of Mary, of her mediation, of her co-redemption demands that her merit be condign: "Because God gave to her her full maternal grace to effect this."⁶³

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Llamera then logically concludes that those who say that Mary's merit cannot be condign because she is not the Head of humanity, confuse the condignity of her merit with the merit of Christ. No one can merit with the condignity of Christ because He alone is God and Head of the Mystical Body. But Mary,

by reason of the divinity and the Headship of Christ is the Mother of God and of men, and, as such, is given the capacity by her full maternal grace in order to merit with maternal condignity the grace of her children. Christ's merit is *condigno capital*. Mary's merit is *condigno maternal*. If one conceives hers as capital, it is unacceptable, since her proper maternal condition is destroyed and she is confused with Christ.⁶⁴

Llamera would qualify Mary's merit with the special denomination of *condigno-maternal*. To use the simple term *condign* confuses it with the merit of Christ which is *condigno-capital*. To qualify it as congruous does not differentiate it from the social filial merit of the adoptive sons of God. Between the social merit of Mary and the social merit of Christians there is the same vast difference as there is between the simple divine filiation of Christians and the divine and spiritual Maternity of Mary. Common filial grace has its perfection and ordination to one's own sanctification and consummation; the maternal grace of Mary has a perfection and ordination, in dependence on the capital grace of Christ, to the acquisition and consummate perfecting of the grace of all the children of God.⁶⁵

To establish his theory of maternal condign merit Llamera proceeds to examine the arguments in favor of merit *de congruo*. Dissension among theologians, he asserts, is due to a diverse concept of Mary's grace or the exigencies of condign merit or to both. Those who defend the condignity of her merit regard her, not as a simple member—although pre-eminent—of the Mystical Body, but as the Mother of the Head of the members, or Mother and Associate of Christ, universal Co-mediatrix and

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Co-redemptrix of the human race. They conceive her grace as "virtualized" by God, connatural and divinely ordained to the acquisition with Christ of universal salvation. This grace, sufficiently perfect, which is ordained both by God and by its natural condition to the universal grace, is proportioned to it and co-merits it condignly. Those who defend the congruity of her merit, while recognizing her to be Associate, Mediatrix, and Co-redemptrix, condition these titles to the conception of the Blessed Virgin as a simple member,—although pre-eminent—of the Mystical Body. Hence her grace is a simple, individual, habitual grace ordained to her personal merit. However much she may merit for others, she does so only congruously.⁶⁶ It is unintelligible, they say, that the grace of a member be equal to that of all the other members; condign grace is proper to the Head and is a virtuality of capital grace; Mary is neither the Head, nor has she such grace, nor does she merit, consequently, condign grace for all men.⁶⁷

There is in this argument, as Cuervo observes,⁶⁸ a fundamental conflict which destroys it. Individual grace, or grace which is not ordered to the grace of others, and a universal soteriological mission mutually exclude each other. The conception of Mary as a simple member makes incomprehensible her soteriological mission and her co-redemptive merit.

But she receives the grace of Christ as do the rest of men, it

⁶⁶ Canon George D. Smith writes: ". . . our Lady is a member, however noble a member of the mystical body of Christ; she is not the Head. . . . The difference between the merit-atonement of the Head and the members is determined precisely in this: that the Head pays the price of redemption, and the members are the beneficiaries. Now what is true of all the members is true of each of them; and therefore also of our Blessed Lady. What Christ is able to do inasmuch as He is Head of the mystical body, our Lady is unable to do precisely because she is not. . . . It would seem that we must assign to her a co-redemptive activity of essentially the same order as that which belongs to the other members of the mystical body; . . . Mary's merit, like the merit of Christ, is universal; but, unlike that of her Son, it is equitable, not condign. . . . To this extent, the merit of Mary for the human race is of the same order as that by which members of the mystical body are able to help one another." Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 97 ff.

⁶⁷ *Art. cit.* in *Estudios Marianos*, XI, 126.

⁶⁸ "Boletín de Teología dogmática," *La Ciencia Tomista*, LVI (1937), 420; "La gracia y el mérito de María," *ibid.*, LVII (1938), 95.

is argued. To this Llamera answers⁶⁹ that she receives her grace from Christ, but not as the rest, nor in the measure of the others, nor for the same ends. She receives it from Christ alone; the rest from Christ and from her. She receives it to be the Mother of Christ and of all Christians. She does not receive it to be incorporated into Christ as a simple member, but to possess it with maternal fullness and to diffuse it to all the members as a Mother. As she receives it with this finality, not merely personal but universal, its ordination is social not individual. The basic argument of meritorious congruism lacks all basis. It might be formulated thus:

Mary is not the Head but a simple member; she does not have capital grace, but individual. Thus it is that He alone Who is Head or has capital grace merits condignly. *Ergo*. . . . The major is false, because it supposes that one must be Head or one must be a simple member, and she is neither the one nor the other. She is MOTHER. The minor is also false, because not only can the Head merit condignly by His capital grace, but also the Mother with her maternal grace.⁷⁰

The other reason for theological controversy is a diverse concept of the exigencies of condign merit. Besides absolute condign merit, there is also relative condign or *ex condignitate*. The latter does not require a parity between the one meriting and the one rewarding, but only an adequation between the work and the reward. Mary's grace through her maternal destiny and her union with her divine Son is so perfect and of a fullness so overflowing, that it surpasses by far that which she co-merits for all the redeemed.⁷¹

Various arguments against condign merit have been averred by theologians. Father C. Friethoff, O.P., at one time objected⁷² that it is not just a speculative question but actual,

⁶⁹ *Art. cit.*, p. 126.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *De Alma Socia Christi Mediatoris* (Rome, 1936), p. 76. As to Friethoff's change of opinion in favor of Mary's relative condign merit, cf. Canon Joseph Bittremieux, "Recensiones," *Marianum*, XI (1949), 347. Friethoff's own statement of his position will be published soon in *Complete Mariology* (London: Blackfriars Publications).

depending upon the divine will, "*quam cognoscere non possumus, nisi Deo revelante.*" Therefore, one must seek the existence of such merit in revelation and there it cannot be found. To this Llamera answers⁷³ that the divine Maternity of Mary and her maternal soteriological association with Christ are found in the sources of revelation, and it is from these that defenders of her condign merit deduce their proofs.

Dr. Gregorio Alastruey, rector of the Pontifical University of Salamanca, argues⁷⁴ that he who would merit condignly for another must be united to God Who is the first and only cause of grace "*de una manera singular y altísima sobre todos.*" With the exception of Christ all men are united to God in one mode, specifically the same, that of filial adoption. Llamera refutes this at length.⁷⁵ First, a specifically different mode of union with God is not necessary for social condign merit. It suffices that the grace be sufficiently perfect and ordered to the grace of others. On the other hand, habitual sanctifying grace is specifically the same in all the just, in Jesus Christ and in the Mother of God, since there is no specific entitative diversity in it. The very special union of Christ is that of His grace of the Hypostatic Union, which, although it makes His merit of infinite dignity, is not its formal principle. The latter is His capital grace, which is His habitual grace insofar as it is ordered to the divine regeneration of all men. The capital grace, even without the Hypostatic Union, would suffice to merit *de condigno* universal grace, although not with rigorous or superabundant condignity.

In the Blessed Virgin there is a special and unique mode of union with God superior to that of sanctifying grace. As Llamera explains,⁷⁶ it is the *maternal union* with the Word corresponding to the filial union of the Word with Mary. To the filial gift of the Word,⁷⁷ corresponds passively her maternal

⁷³ *Art. cit.*, p. 129.

⁷⁴ *Tratado de la Virgen Santísima* (Madrid, 1952), pp. 584-585.

⁷⁵ *Art. cit.*, p. 134.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

⁷⁷ Cf. M. Llamera, O. P., "María, Madre Corredentora," *Estudios Marianos*, VII (1948), 160-161.

possession of the Son of God, which is the highest possession after the Hypostatic Union, incomparably greater than the possession of God by grace and glory. The supreme ontological gift of God is the hypostatic gift in which the divine Person personalizes the nature assumed. But conjunctively with it, and supreme after it, is the filial gift in which He is given as Son to His Mother. To this filial giving of Himself corresponds the maternal having and possessing Him. The maternal possession of the Word is the "*gracia de unión o donación filial*," proceeding from the Hypostatic Union and alone comparable to it. Mary's intimate relationship by her maternal possession of the Word is beyond all human understanding.

Consequent upon the Hypostatic Union or the grace of union, there is in Christ the infinite habitual grace which supernaturalizes His soul and its powers, and energizes them in order to operate divinely and radiate to others the life which He possesses in its fullness. The grace of union or filial gift demands a similar plenitude of grace in Mary. As the maternal possession of the Word is a divine repercussion of the grace of union, the full grace of Mary is a repercussion of the full grace of Christ: it is not equal, for the Blessed Virgin is not Christ, but it is to the grace of Christ, what the maternal possession is to the Hypostatic Union. For the same reason, it is as similar in its intensity, efficacy, and extension, as the union between the Son and the Mother is intimate. From this Llamera concludes:

This very full communication of the grace of Christ to Mary transfuses vitally the virtualities of the Son to the Mother and reproduces in her, according to her maternal mode, the very characteristics of the Savior and constitutes her with Him a universal co-principle of Redemption and divinization. Thus, the grace of Mary, . . . although specifically the same as all deifying grace, is not merely *filial* like that of all others, but *maternal* for that of all and as such, *condignly meritorious* of that of all.⁷⁸

Alastruey likewise objects that the intrinsic ordination of grace in the Mother of God is not different from that of other

⁷⁸ *Art. cit. in Estudios Marianos*, XI, 135. My italics.

creatures; that her grace, being finite, does not have the ordination and tendency to merit condignly a reward for others, but only for self.⁷⁹ Both Cuervo⁸⁰ and Llamera have foreseen this difficulty. The latter answers that this is valid only of filial grace:

Capital grace, while actually belonging only to Christ, was virtually that of all His members and for all. Mary's maternal grace, while actually belonging only to herself, was that of all her children and for all. Thus, although in act the divine life was only in her, virtually it was the divine life of all. And as Christ's grace, because it was capital, was ordained intrinsically and connaturally to merit that of all His members, Mary's because it was maternal, was ordained intrinsically and connaturally to merit that of all her children. For that ordination it did not need to be infinite, . . . but full and maternal as it was.⁸¹

Nor is there, according to Alastruey,⁸² the extrinsic ordination, commonly demanded by theologians for condign merit, since it is not clear from explicit revelation. Nor may one say that this special ordination of God is contained in the decree which constitutes Mary consort of the Redeemer and Mediatrix, for which functions the eminence of her merit *de congruo* is sufficient.

Inasmuch as Alastruey in the *Tratado de la Virgen Santísima* masterfully presents Mary as Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix with universality of merit, then, Llamera says,⁸³ it is only comprehensible that her merit is congruous and not condign, if the grace with which she merits, is inadequate to the reward. If the grace is proportionate to the reward and is ordained by God and by its very nature to attain it, why does it not do so condignly? To admit sufficiency and the ordination of grace and to defend only congruity of merit is a veritable incongruity.

Moreover, if her functions as Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix

⁷⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 588. Cf. Marie-Joseph Nicolas, O. P., "Théologie mariale," *Revue Thomiste*, LIII (1953), 167-174.

⁸⁰ Cf. *supra* and note 38.

⁸¹ *Art. cit.* in *Estudios Marianos*, XI, 135-136. Cf. *supra* and note 60.

⁸² *Op. cit.*, p. 588.

⁸³ *Art. cit.*, p. 136.

demand essentially the universal merit of grace, and congruous merit is insufficient as all congruous merit is, it is evident that she does not sufficiently fulfill these functions with such merit, for if she is congruous in merit, she is congruous in mediation and in co-redemption. It is certain that God could supply in His bounty what she fell short of in meriting. But in this supposition one would be forced to admit that, having predestined her to be the universal regenerative consort with Christ, He endowed her insufficiently to exercise it, since He did not give her proportioned grace, or what is still less intelligible, that He gave it to her but it was not ordained to her mission. Nor is it valid to say that the Redemption exacts condign merit, and co-redemption, only congruous. Is it perhaps to exalt the superiority of the merit of Christ? Inasmuch as the Blessed Virgin is the first and principal beneficiary, her merit being its principal effect, it is the more exalted the more that is communicated to her. Can it be that the co-redemption does not demand so much merit? Or can it be, rather, that the universal grace of the redeemed can be condignly merited only by Christ? Alastruey's argument, like that of others, presupposes that there is only one manner of meriting condignly, that is, in strict justice, which can belong only to Christ. It likewise assumes that Mary's merit should be congruous to be distinguished from that of the Redeemer; moreover, that in condign merit there is required an infinitude of moral perfection which she lacks.

The answer to these objections is a restatement of the major tenets of those who held condign maternal merit. Because Mary is a Mother Co-redemptrix, she must co-merit salvation in dependence on and in subordination to Christ. Hence the condignity of her merit is inferior to His, which is capital condign and absolute, while that of Mary is maternal condign and relative. The infinite dignity which the Hypostatic Union gives to merit is necessary for absolute condign merit; the immeasurable dignity which the divine Maternity gives to that of Mary suffices for relative condign merit. Mary's grace and merit were ordered to the co-redemption. Only through in-

sufficiency in the ordination and grace could this co-redemptive merit be congruous. Had it been thus, Mary would not have been equal to her mission. Any such insufficiency in so singular an ordination as that which links the Blessed Virgin with her Son in the regeneration of mankind is inadmissible. Llamera concludes: "Our life of children of God is the reward co-adapted to her meritorious activity. . . . Only with a certain indigence or inadequacy as to her spiritual Maternity, may one deny the condignity of her co-redemptive merit."⁸⁴

Father Clément Dillenschneider, C. SS. R., refuses to assent to any consideration of Mary's condign merit on the grounds that she is not a social person:

In fine, only Christ by reason of the Hypostatic Union in which is rooted His capital grace is a social person, and that is why His merits alone avail for us as if we had acquired them in Him. . . . Mary, Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix of our salvation *in actu primo*, is not, like Christ, a social person. Her divine Maternity in which is rooted her mediation does not elevate her to the dignity of the Hypostatic Union. She is a person with a social mission; this is very different. The grace by which she merits for us, is a social grace, and her merit, social merit; but her grace is not properly speaking a capital grace; it cannot be. . . .⁸⁵

It is true that social condign merit demands a social or public personality. However, it is false, answers Llamera,⁸⁶ that the person predestined by God to be Mediatrix and universal Co-redemptrix, endowed as Dillenschneider says, with a social grace and merit, is not a *social person*, or that Headship and divinity are required for this social personality. Because Mary is a social person, and acts in the name of all, her grace is social and the merit of her grace is also social and not for herself alone. As Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix, she is a public person with solidarity, responsibility, and universal efficiency. If she co-redeemed all, because she represented all and acted in their person, and this Dillenschneider admits,⁸⁷ how is it

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁸⁵ *Pour une Corédemption mariale bien comprise* (Rome, 1949), p. 138.

⁸⁶ *Art. cit.*, p. 138.

⁸⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff. *passim*.

possible for her to have this mission, function, and social power, and not be a social person?

The Headship makes Christ the most perfect social personality, but this is not the only way in which this is conferred. As Head He is predestined and ordained to the regeneration, redemption of all mankind. In association with Him and in dependence on Him His Mother is also ordained to the salvation of all men. She also, insofar as she has been predestined and rendered capable of fulfilling this function, possesses in dependence on Christ the representation of all. She, too, is a social person:

Because He is the God-Man, Head and Redeemer of men, she is the Mother of God, and Mother and Co-redemptrix of men. The social name of Christ is Head-Redeemer. The social name of Mary is Mother-Co-redemptrix. As the universal personality of Christ is based on His Headship, that of Mary is based on her spiritual Maternity.⁸⁸

To continue the analogy: just as Christ by His universal personality of Head of men merits for all *de condigno* in strict justice, Mary by her universal personality of Mother of men, merits for all *de condigno ex condignitate*. Capital grace is necessary for absolute condign merit and for this reason, merit in strict justice is proper to Christ alone. For relative condign merit the maternal grace suffices.⁸⁹

Dillenschneider proposes another difficulty:

Because Christ the Head represents ontologically each human person, not by the title of the plenitude of sanctifying grace, but in virtue of the Hypostatic Union in which this plenitude is rooted, He alone merits *de condigno* for others.⁹⁰

In other words Mary, lacking divinity, cannot be a social person. Dillenschneider forgets, says Llamera,⁹¹ that Christ is the Head of humanity insofar as He is man, and that His Headship is the formal function of His habitual grace and not of the grace of union.⁹² He also forgets that without Christ

⁸⁸ *Art. cit.*, p. 139.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁹¹ *Art. cit.*, p. 139.

⁹² Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 5.

and with Christ, God could confer universal Headship on a mere man.⁹³ Actually, He did not so confer it. However, He conferred on the Mother of God universal Maternity with a fullness of maternal grace, ordained to co-merit all grace.

Dillenschneider, representing those who maintain that her social merit is congruous, asserts⁹⁴ that a Marian co-merit *de condigno* is prejudicial to Christ the Head. The precaution of not confusing Mary with Christ is a very just one, answers Llamera,⁹⁵ but he denies that in proclaiming the relative condignity of her maternal merit, corresponding to her divine and spiritual Maternity, she is confused with Christ, since "*en Cristo proclamamos un mérito condigno capital, correspondiente a su condición de Verbo Humanado, Cabeza de la humanidad.*" Rather, there is a danger of the other extreme that she, the Mother of God and of men with maternal grace, be confused with the Christian who has the filial grace of adoption.

* * *

Insofar as Mary's spiritual Maternity, her co-redemption, and her mediation of all grace are challenging questions in this Age of Mary, theologians are faced with the key problem of determining the exact quality of Mary's merit. The opinions of European mariologists here presented on the condignity of her merit attest that the keenest of controversies in Mariology is already well launched. At the present moment one can only sketch the gradual evolution of opinions expounded so far and watch the development of these seminal ideas in the next decade. Even as the Hypostatic Union is a mystery, so the Hypostatic order⁹⁶ to which Mary belongs is mysterious, for she is a mystery and "God alone excepted, no one can attain to her even in thought."⁹⁷

⁹³ *Ibid.*, III, q. 64, a. 4.

⁹⁴ "Le problème du co-mérite médiateur de la Vierge dans l'économie divine," *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Études Mariiales*, II (1936), 191.

⁹⁵ *Art. cit.*, p. 140.

⁹⁶ Cf. Maurice Dionne, "La grâce de Marie est d'ordre hypostatique," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, X (1954), 142.

⁹⁷ Bull., *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854.

In the question of congruous and condign merit in which a multiplicity of issues is involved and in which there is still imprecision as to terminology, mariologists may well heed the twofold warning of Pius XII that they "beware of teachings that lack foundation, and that, by misuse of words, exceed the bounds of truth. Also, that they beware of too great a narrowness of mind when they are considering that unique, completely exalted, indeed almost divine dignity of the Mother of God which the Angelic Doctor teaches we must attribute to her 'by reason of the infinite good which is God.'"⁹⁸

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⁹⁸ *Ad Caeli Reginam*, October 11, 1954.

MERIT AND PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF GRACE



THE supernatural or the Christian life—there is no supernatural life except in Christ—is essentially the life of grace. Only those Christians fully live up to their name who live in a state of grace. If sinners are still called Christians, it is because they retain, in spite of their sinful state, some habitual gifts of graces, namely, faith and hope.¹ Yet their state is rather one of spiritual death—mortal sin—than of life. What is left in them of grace cannot lead them to the goal of life eternal. But in the just the development of the life of grace is one with growth in grace. And this increase of sanctifying grace, our faith teaches, happens mainly in two ways: by the reception of the sacraments and by good works. Sacramental growth in grace does not perhaps, according to contemporary Thomistic theology of the sacraments, radically differ from the extra-sacramental one, as far as man's subjective disposition or co-operation with grace goes; ² it does not happen, at any rate, without the subjective co-operation of the recipient; but we shall not speak of this question here. Both faith and theological tradition maintain that, outside the sacraments, the development of the life of grace in the just follows on man's co-operation with grace in several ways: by way of merit, whether in the strict or in the improper sense of the word, or by way of prayer or impetration. The just are bound and able to keep the commandments, and by so doing they grow in grace.³ They also have to pray and ask for what they cannot have of themselves: St. Augustine, and later Trent, taught

¹ Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 838 (for faith); *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 6, a. 2; q. 17, a. 8; q. 23, a. 8.

² Cf. H. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *De sacramentele Heileconomie*, Antwerp, 1952; especially pp. 621 f.

³ Denzinger, 828, 830, 1092; 834, 842.

that we must do what we can and ask for what we cannot.⁴ In our theological treatises on grace, however, the respective roles and places of merit and prayer in the life of grace seem at times ill-defined, if considered at all. And theological opinion differs in regard to what the just can merit in a condign manner and by way of congruous merit.⁵ Nor is it always clear what exactly prayer is meant to effect and in what manner.⁶ Should we pray for what we can merit? What does it mean to impetrate a favor? Is impetration different from congruous merit?

The following considerations intend to examine the respective roles of merit and prayer in the life of grace. It lies outside their purpose to examine what is left of grace in sinners and what their prayer or good works can effect. Nor shall we enter into the consideration of the social aspect of the life of grace, of merit and prayer, however important and topical this question may be. These two problems whose treatment would require a lengthy study will only briefly be indicated in appendix I and II. Our present question is this: knowing as we do from our faith that the just are called to grow constantly in grace and that they cannot do so without good works and prayer, what are the roles of merit and impetration in the development of their life of grace? Why are these needed? What are their proper objects? We shall look for the answer to these questions mainly in the teaching of St. Thomas. Our problem, then, concerns the need and role of our effort in the supernatural life.

Basic Principle: Man, Artisan of His Own Salvation

A preliminary question, one whose answer commands the whole subsequent exposition is this: Must man co-operate with grace and why? As is well-known, the answer to this question is what differentiates the Catholic position from that of Protestants. It commands two different ideas of the whole of

⁴ *Ibid.*, 804.

⁵ Cf. H. Quiliet, "Congruo(de), Condigno(de)," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, III (1908), esp. 1141-45, 1150-52.

⁶ Cf. O. Karrer's book (on Index), *Gebet, Vorsehung, Wunder*, Luzern, 1941.

Christianity. Protestantism replies: Our good works are not needed nor have they any effect on our justification, whether in its origin or in its growth. Man is saved by faith alone, because salvation is a pure grace, the fruit of Christ's merits, not of ours. To attribute merit to our own actions is to detract from the fulness of Christ's redemption. Good works may be a necessary sign and fruit of justification, they are not its cause, not even in an instrumental and subordinate manner.⁷

In the face of this repudiation of man's good works and effort, the Council of Trent defined the need for the just to keep the commandments—they can do so if they make an effort and pray—and by good works to grow in grace. Their good works effectively make for growth in grace; they do so by way of merit. This merit does not in any way diminish the fulness of Christ's redemption, because every merit of ours is rooted in that of Christ. Our good works are no less God's gifts than they are our deserts. It is in His goodness that God wanted His gifts to man also to be their merits.⁸

The basic principle of this teaching of the faith was given four centuries before Trent by St. Thomas. It may briefly be stated thus: God wants us to be the artisans of our own salvation and sanctification, by co-operation with grace, in the largest measure possible.⁹ And the reason for this divine disposition is His very love for men; because He wants them to share in perfection in the largest possible measure. St. Thomas says, in connection with the merit of Christ:

To have any good thing of oneself is more excellent than to have it from another; for "a cause that effects of itself takes precedence

⁷ This is in a nutshell the protestant rejection of merit as this was understood by the Fathers of the Council of Trent. We shall not enter into the question of the historical accurateness of this understanding.

⁸ Denzinger, 804, 828, 830; 809, 834, 842; 810.

⁹ So formulated by Cajetan in *Summam Theologicam*, III, q. 46, a. 3, "Quod homo seipsum salvat, redimat, pro se pugnet, mereatur, vincat . . . ad nostram spectat dignitatem." On this idea, cf. the excellent article of J. Putz, "The Meaning of Christianity," *The Clergy Monthly*, IX (1945-46), 263-78, 294-303, where the principle is mainly applied to explain the concept of "immanent reparation" as a "*ratio convenientiae*" for the redemptive Incarnation. The quotation from Cajetan, *ibid.*, 296.

over one that effects through another," as is said in the VIII Book of the *Physics*. But one is said to have something of himself when he is himself in some way the cause of it. Now of all the good that we have God is the first and foremost cause; and in this way no creature can have any good thing of itself, according to the texts of Scripture, 1 Cor. 4:7, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" Nonetheless in a secondary manner some one can be himself the cause of his having some good, namely, to the extent that he co-operates with God for having it. And in this manner he who possesses something by his own merit has it in a way of himself. And so it is more excellent to have any good thing by his own merit than to have it without any merit of his own.¹⁰

It is therefore because it is a greater perfection for man to be himself to some extent the author of his own salvation that God in His love demands his co-operation with grace. For then man is to some extent self-made and responsible for what he is or becomes.¹¹ The co-operation referred to in the quoted text is by way of merit. When explaining this below, we shall come to other applications of the same principle. There are spiritual favors man can have in some way of himself in another manner than that of merit.

This principle is, moreover, only an extension to the supernatural life of St. Thomas' well-known teaching on the real causality of creatures or secondary causes. Especially in the *Summa contra Gentes*, the Angelic Doctor refutes the occasionalism of Muslim philosophers which withdraws from creatures any true causality to attribute the whole of it to God alone—a mistaken manner of giving honor to God. It is rather by acknowledging that creatures are really second causes and

¹⁰ *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 19, a. 3: "Habere aliquod bonum per se est nobilius quam habere illud per aliud; 'semper enim causa quae est per se, potior est ea quae est per aliud,' ut dicitur in *VIII Phys.* Hoc autem dicitur aliquis habere per seipsum, cuius est sibi aliquo modo causa. Prima autem causa omnium bonorum nostrorum per auctoritatem est Deus; et per hunc modum nulla creatura habet aliquid boni per seipsam, secundum illud I ad Cor. 4:7: 'Quid habes quod non accepisti?' Potest tamen secundario aliquis esse causa sibi alicuius boni habendi, inquantum scilicet in hoc ipso Deo cooperatur. Et sic ille qui habet aliquid per meritum proprium, habet quodammodo illud per seipsum. Unde nobilius habetur id quod habetur per meritum quam id quod habetur sine merito."

¹¹ Cf. Putz, *art. cit.*, 267.

imitate God or participate and reveal His perfection by exerting a causal influence themselves, that they give glory to their Creator.¹² There is no need of citing here many texts, a few brief ones taken among many and from different works in different contexts suffice to show how taken for granted is this conviction of St. Thomas.

A creature strives after similarity with God by its operation. But by its operation one thing becomes the cause of another. So things strive after similarity with God by exerting causality on other things.¹³—God is the most perfect agent. Accordingly, what He has created, of necessity derives perfection from Him. And so to depreciate the perfection of creatures is to depreciate the power of God. But if no creature has an action of its own in order to produce an effect, its perfection is depreciated a good deal, for it is from the overflow of its perfection that a thing draws its power to communicate it to another. And so this position depreciates the power of God.¹⁴—It comes from God's goodness that He gives to His creatures according to their respective being; and for that reason He communicates to them of His perfection not only their own excellence but also the power to give perfection to others with His help; and this is the most perfect way for them to imitate God.¹⁵—God rules the lower things by the higher, not that His power is in need of them, but because of His exceeding goodness in order to com-

¹² *Summa contra Gentes*, III, c. 21: Quod res intendunt assimilari Deo in hoc quod sunt causae; c. 69: De opinione eorum qui a rebus naturalibus proprias subtrahunt actiones; c. 70: Quomodo idem effectus sit a Deo et a naturali agente; c. 77: Quod executio divinae Providentiae fit mediantibus causis secundis.

¹³ *III Cont. Gent.*, c. 21: "Tendit enim in divinam similitudinem res creata per suam operationem. Per suam autem operationem una res fit causa alterius. Ergo in hoc etiam res intendunt divinam similitudinem ut sint aliis causae."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 69: "Deus autem est perfectissimum agens. Oportet igitur quod res ab Ipso creatae perfectionem ab eo consequantur. Detrahere ergo perfectioni creaturarum est detrahere perfectioni divinae virtutis. Sed, si nulla creatura habet aliquam propriam actionem ad aliquem effectum producendum, multum detrahitur perfectioni creaturae; ex abundantia enim perfectionis est quod perfectionem quam aliquid habet possit alteri communicare. Detrahit igitur haec positio divinae virtuti."

¹⁵ *De Verit.*, q. 9, a. 2: "Ex bonitate divina procedit quod ipse de perfectione sua creaturis communicet secundum earum proportionem; et ideo non solum in tantum communicat eis de sua bonitate, quod in se sint bona et perfecta, sed etiam ut aliis perfectionem largiantur, Deo quodammodo cooperante; et hic est nobilissimus modus divinae imitationis."

municate to creatures also the dignity of causality.¹⁶—It is a greater perfection for a thing not only to be good in itself but also to be the cause of goodness in another thing, rather than only to be good in itself. And for that reason God so rules creation as to establish some things as causes of other things.¹⁷—God keeps some things in being through the intermediary of some causes.¹⁸

Creatures, therefore, according to St. Thomas' unchanging teaching about second causes, exert a causality of their own, not independently of God but in a way as His instruments, in subordination to Him as First Cause. And this power of causality is the most precious gift He can make them; it increases in perfection with the degree of the creature's participation in being.

Since however grace does not destroy nature but rather perfects it after the manner of nature,¹⁹ it is but natural that in the supernatural order as well the causality of creatures will have its place. St. Thomas proves this by an argument *a fortiori*: since God's supernatural love is more excellent than His natural love for creatures, it will all the more communicate to His adopted children the power of causality in the order of grace. For, compared with God's love for His creatures, which is the source of their natural qualities, the love of God for man calling him to life eternal, which is the source of grace, is a special love; it is love "*simpliciter*":

It is evident that on every love of God follows some good in the creature caused in time and not co-eternal with His eternal love. And according to the difference of the good so produced, God's love for the creature is also considered to be different. One is called the common love according to which "He loves all that is," as the Book of Wisdom says, 11:25; and out of this love He gives

¹⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 22, a. 3: "Inferiora gubernat per superiora, non propter defectum suae virtutis, sed propter abundantiam suae bonitatis, ut dignitatem causalitatis etiam creaturis communicet."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 103, a. 6: "Maior autem perfectio est quod aliquid in se sit bonum, et etiam sit alii causa bonitatis, quam si esset solummodo in se bonum. Et ideo sic Deus gubernat res, ut quosdam aliarum in gubernando causas instituat."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 104, a. 2: "Deus conservat res quasdam in esse, mediantibus aliquibus causis."

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2; q. 2, a. ad 1; II-II, q. 188, a. 8.

creatures their natural being. But there is another love that is special, out of which He raises the rational creature above the condition of its nature to have a share in the divine Good. And with regard to this love, God is said to love "*simpliciter*," because out of this love God wishes a creature, in an unrestricted manner, the eternal Good that He is Himself.²⁰

If then God's general love for creatures is the reason why He communicates to them principles of activity by which they share His causality, then so much the more will His special love for His adopted sons be the source of supernatural principles of activity—they act supernaturally to the extent that they are moved by Him—, of a share in His supernatural causality:

It is not becoming that God would provide in a less perfect way for those whom His love calls to the possession of supernatural Good than for the creatures He loves and calls to the possession of a natural good. But natural creatures He provides for not only by moving them to their natural acts, but also by giving them some perfections and powers that are principles of those acts and incline them to those movements of His. And in this manner these movements of God who moves them become connatural and easy to the creatures, according to the saying of Wisdom 8 :1, that "He disposes everything sweetly." Much more then will He give those whom He moves to the obtention of the supernatural and eternal Good some supernatural perfections and qualities by which they can be moved by Him sweetly and promptly towards the obtention of the eternal Good.²¹

²⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 110, a. 1: "Patet igitur quod quamibet Dei dilectionem sequitur aliquod bonum in creatura causatum quandoque, non tamen dilectioni aeternae coaeternum. Et secundum huiusmodi boni differentiam, differens consideratur dilectio Dei ad creaturam. Una quidem communis, secundum quam 'diligat omnia quae sunt,' ut dicitur Sap. 2:25; secundum quam esse naturale rebus creatis largitur. Alia autem est dilectio specialis, secundum quam trahit creaturam rationalem supra conditionem naturae, ad participationem divini boni. Et secundum hanc dilectionem dicitur aliquem diligere simpliciter: quia secundum hanc dilectionem vult Deus simpliciter creaturae bonum aeternum, quod est ipse."

²¹ *Ibid.*, a. 2, "Non est conveniens quod Deus minus provideat his quos diligit ad supernaturale bonum habendum, quam creaturis quas diligit ad bonum naturale habendum. Creaturis autem naturalibus sic providet ut non solum moveat eas ad actus naturales, sed etiam largiatur eis formas et virtutes quasdam, quae sunt principia actuum, ut secundum seipsas inclinentur ad huiusmodi actus. Et sic

These infused perfections are grace and the virtues, both of which are principles of activity, the former the remote, the latter the immediate, principles of supernatural operations. St. Thomas' very concept of the infused virtues, as supernatural principles of operation, and of the reason for their infusion, namely, to enable man to strive after his supernatural end by proportionate actions,²² is another way of expressing the God-willed need of man's active co-operation with grace.

According, no less than in the order of nature, rather more, does God communicate to His creatures the power of causality in the order of grace. And so the very love of God for man whom He adopts as son and raises to share in His own life, demands that he should co-operate with grace in the highest possible measure. The degree of co-operation to which God calls him measures the love of God for him. If that co-operation happens to be differentiated in varying degrees of perfection or varying degrees of created causality, this will not be, one should say *a priori*, because God's love arbitrarily, as it were, restricts man's share in the life of grace—that love wants only one thing: that man should be the cause of his own sanctification as much as he can—but rather because the very nature of the objects to which his supernatural activity is oriented commands this variety.

Natural and Supernatural Operations

Before detailing the different ways in which the just are to co-operate with God's grace and so to be some extent the authors of their own salvation, we must briefly point to St. Thomas' teaching on the proper characteristic of supernatural activity which differentiates it from natural causality.

Every created causality, whether natural or supernatural, of

motus quibus a Deo moventur, fiunt creaturis connaturales et faciles; secundum illud Sap. 8:1, quod 'disponit omnia suaviter.' Multo igitur magis illis quos movet ad consequendum bonum supernaturale aeternum, infundit aliquas formas seu qualitates supernaturales, secundum quas suaviter et prompte ab ipso moveantur ad bonum aeternum consequendum."

²² *Ibid.*, q. 52, a. 4; q. 62, a. 2; q. 63, a. 3.

necessity presents a twofold aspect: a passive one, the agent is perfected by his action or acquires a perfection himself; and an active one, it is the agent who perfects himself by his own action. No creature is a pure agent, it is in every one of its actions both agent and patient. God alone, being pure Act, is also pure agent, since He cannot acquire any perfection:

There are agents who are both agents and patients at the same time; these are imperfect agents; these it behooves that in their action they intend to acquire some perfection. But the first Agent, who is agent only, it does not behoove to act in order to acquire some end; He only intends to communicate perfection or goodness. And every creature intends to acquire its own perfection which is a similitude of God's perfection and goodness.²³

Now, this passive aspect of created activity, according to which a created agent is of necessity enriched by his action, is basically the same in natural and supernatural operations. It is the disposition of the agent to acquire his own perfection, his disposition as patient. The only difference, and it is an important one, is that in natural activity the perfection the agent acquires is connatural to his state in the scale of beings, while in supernatural operations that perfection is above the agent's nature. In both ways of acquiring a new perfection, the ultimate disposition for its actual reception is, according to St. Thomas' principles on reciprocal causality and priority between form and disposition of the subject, caused by way of formal causality by the perfection itself at the very moment of its acquisition.²⁴

But the active aspect is different in natural and in supernatural activity. Natural activity produces or acquires its object or end by way of efficiency, supernatural activity by way of "merit," that is, as far as our present purpose goes (we shall

²³ *Ibid.*, I, q. 44, a. 4: "Sunt autem quaedam quae simul agunt et patiuntur, quae sunt agentia imperfecta; et his convenit quod etiam in agendo intendunt aliquid acquirere. Sed primo agenti, qui est agens tantum, non convenit agere propter acquisitionem alicuius finis; sed intendit solum communicare suam perfectionem, quae est eius bonitas. Et unaquaeque creatura intendit consequi suam perfectionem, quae est similitudo perfectionis et bonitatis divinae."

²⁴ Cf. v. g., *ibid.*, I-II, q. 113, a. 8, ad 2.

further determine it when opposing merit and prayer), it attains its end through the intervention of another who gives or gives back what the agent seeks:

Every thing reaches its ultimate end through its operation. And this operation thus leading to the end is either effective of the end, when the end is not above the power of the agent who acts for the sake of the end, as medication is effective of health; or it is meritorious of the end, when the end is above the power of the agent who acts for the sake of the end, and then *the end is expected to be given by another*.²⁵

What therefore differentiates natural and supernatural operations is the way in which the agents strive after the end. In natural activity the agent conquers the end; it is his own conquest. Not so in supernatural activity. All that the agent does or can do is to strive after the end (which he cannot conquer of himself, since it is above his power) and expect that it will be given him by another.²⁶ Such is the case of merit, whether in the strict or in the broad sense; such also the case of impetration or prayer.

Threefold Way of Supernatural Causality

There are the three ways, commonly accepted in the contemporary theology of grace, though perhaps rarely systematized,

²⁵ *Ibid.*, I, q. 62, a. 1: "Quaelibet autem res ad ultimum finem per suam operationem pertingit. Quae quidem operatio in finem ducens, vel est factiva finis, quando finis non excedit virtutem eius quod operatur propter finem, sicut medicatio est factiva sanitatis; vel est meritoria finis, quando finis excedit virtutem operantis propter finem, unde expectatur finis ex dono alterius."

²⁶ There is no need for our present purpose to enter into the discussion of the difference in instrumentality with regard to God, chief Cause, between natural and supernatural activity. Suffice it to say that in the order of grace this instrumentality is more properly so-called, since the supernatural activity is in a sense "divine," that is, qualified as it were by the chief Cause, not by the created instrument; not so the natural activity.

Nor do we develop here the "social" aspect which is inherent in every activity that is not purely immanent. On the non-rational level this causality on others makes for the order in the material world as a cosmos; on the rational or human level, it becomes properly social, that is, a co-operation of persons who are members in a community; on the supernatural level it is the communion of saints among members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Of the latter a brief sketch is given below in appendix II.

by which the just co-operating with grace are the artisans of their own salvation and sanctification: the way of strict merit, that of congruous or improper merit, and that of prayer or impetration. Common to all three of these is the manner just pointed out in which their causal influence attains the object or end they are after: they do not effect or conquer it but expect and receive it from another. Today this sort of causality would generally be called "moral," as opposed to physical, a terminology which apparently is not found in St. Thomas. If we use it, we should remember that this is not the whole of the causality of these actions; there is, besides, the dispositive causality mentioned already, by which the agent is disposed to receive the perfection he is striving after, and this is physical or ontological in its own way. As to the question whether and to what extent merit and prayer also obtain in the order of nature, this need not detain us. St. Thomas' analysis of each of them bears directly on the life of grace.

To all three of these ways of supernatural causality apply two important principles of St. Thomas that preclude many an objection raised against prayer in particular, as though our prayer or merit intended to bring about a modification in the dispositions of divine Providence, or entailed a sort of change in the divine Will. Every created causality is a way by which the dispositions of divine Providence come into effect. God's Providence normally effects His aims through the intermediary of second causes. Their activity in no way detracts from God's causality, it rather reveals the perfection of that causality.²⁷ So also merit and prayer are second causes by which the dispositions of divine Providence come into effect. St. Thomas says this in so many words when explaining the fittingness of prayer:

Divine Providence not only disposes that some effects should come about, but also by which causes and in what order of sequence they should do so. Among these causes there are also human actions that are causes of some effects. And so men must act as though their actions were to change the divine disposition, but in

²⁷ Cf. above nn. 12-18.

order that by their actions they bring about some effects according to the order arranged by God.²⁸

As to the objection that divine Providence works its effects through the medium of second causes that are proportionate to these effects, and that prayer for example is no such proportionate cause,²⁹ this will be answered presently when we explain the proper way of causality of merit and prayer.

The second remark is the well-known principle of St. Thomas that the order of sequence and dependence which exists between different effects of the divine Will exists only in the effects and in no way among supposedly successive acts of the divine Will. God, he says, "wills that one thing exists because of another, He does not will one thing because of another."³⁰ And so the dependence of some divine favors on our meritorious actions or on our prayer, which entails that these graces would not be given without our merit or prayer, does not in any way offend against the perfect simplicity of the divine Will.

Causality of Condign Merit

What, then, is the proper causality of condign merit? St. Thomas' answer is found in the first three articles of the *Summa*, I-II, q. 114. To the question whether man can merit before God—and he has in mind merit in the strict or proper sense, namely, such as deserves its reward in justice—he replies as follows. Merit or reward pertain to justice. Justice supposes equality. But between God and man there is no equality and therefore there can be no absolute justice but only a relative one—not "*simpliciter*" but only "*secundum quid*." Therefore

²⁸ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 2: "Ex divina providentia non solum disponitur qui effectus fiant, sed etiam ex quibus causis et quo ordine proveniant. Inter alias autem causas sunt etiam quorundam causae actus humani. Unde oportet homines agere aliqua, non ut per suos actus divinam dispositionem immutent, sed ut per actus suos impleant quosdam effectus secundum ordinem a Deo dispositum."

²⁹ Cf. Karrer, *op. cit.*, v. g., 61 ff. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 2: "Actus autem cuiuscumque rei non ordinatur divinitus ad aliquid excedens proportionem virtutis quae est principium actus: hoc enim est ex institutione divinae providentiae, ut nihil agat ultra suam virtutem."

³⁰ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 5: "Vult ergo hoc esse propter hoc, sed non propter hoc vult hoc."

all justice between God and man can never be one based on absolute equality but only on proportion, insofar as both God and man act each in their own manner:

The manner and measure of man's power come from God. And so there can be no merit of man with God except presupposing a divine disposition: man should by his action obtain as a reward from God that for which God gave him the power to act. Things of nature also attain by their activity that end to which God oriented them. But the manner is different: a rational creature moves itself to action of its free will, and because of this its action is meritorious; this is not so in other creatures.³¹

Accordingly, for a man to merit with God in the strict sense supposes that by his free action he strives after the goal for which God gave him the power to act. This goal, connatural end of man's God-given power, is reward and not simply end: it is God who renders the reward for the action, it is not man who of himself conquers the goal. And God renders this in justice, to the extent that there can be justice between God and man. Actually this justice, St. Thomas explains, is of a peculiar type:

Because our action is meritorious only because of God's disposition, God does not, as a consequence, become debtor to man but rather to Himself: He owes it to Himself that His disposition should be fulfilled.³²

³¹ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 1: "Modus autem et mensura humanae virtutis homini est a Deo. Et ideo meritum hominis apud Deum esse non potest nisi secundum praesuppositionem divinae ordinationis: ita scilicet ut id homo consequatur a Deo per suam operationem quasi mercedem, ad quod Deus ei virtutem operandi deputavit. Sic etiam res naturales hoc consequuntur per suos motus et operationes, ad quod a Deo sunt ordinatae. Differenter tamen: quia creatura rationalis seipsam movet ad agendum per liberum arbitrium, unde sua actio habet rationem meriti; quod non est in aliis creaturis."—In the Commentary on the *Sentences* St. Thomas conceived the justice of God that is operative in rewarding merit in a different manner, as distributive justice, cf. v. g., *IV Sent.*, d. 46, q. 1, sol. 1, or d. 43, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4; cf. P. De Letter, S. J. *De ratione meriti secundum S. Thomam* (Rome, 1939), pp. 21-27. But this evolution of his ideas need not detain us here. It is more the objective or ontological reality expressed by condign merit, rather than its juridical connotations, that must be brought out, in order to distinguish it from the causality of improper merit and of impetration.

³² *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 1, ad 3: Quia actio nostra non habet rationem

When we say: God in justice rewards our meritorious actions, we mean: He keeps to their objective orientation which He Himself gave them. If we ask: In what ontological reality is this orientation expressed? St. Thomas answers: In the very gift of grace. No action is directed by God towards a goal that is above the agent's power.

Yet eternal life is a good that is above the perfection of a created nature; it even exceeds a creature's knowledge and desire, according to 1 Cor. 2:9, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man." And so no created nature is a sufficient principle of acts that merit eternal life: some supernatural gift must be added to it, and this is called grace.³³

Grace, therefore, implants in the meritorious acts an intrinsic proportion to the supernatural goal. And because of this, man can merit a supernatural reward in a condign manner. The needed equality demanded by justice and condign merit is given with grace:

If we speak of a meritorious work insofar as it proceeds from the grace of the Holy Spirit, it does merit life eternal in a condign manner. For then its meritorious value is estimated on the power of the Holy Spirit who moves us to eternal life, according to the word of John 4:14, "it shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting." And the price of the work is also estimated according to the dignity of grace by which man having been made a sharer in the divine nature, is adopted as a son of God, and to such the inheritance is due by right of adoption, according to Rom. 8:17, "If sons, then also heirs."³⁴

meriti nisi ex praesuppositione divinae ordinationis, non sequitur quod Deus efficiatur simpliciter debitor nobis, sed sibi ipsi: inquantum debitum est ut sua ordinatio impleatur."

³³ *Ibid.*, a. 2: "Vita autem aeterna est quoddam bonum excedens proportionem naturae creatae: quia etiam excedit cognitionem et desiderium eius, secundum illud 1 Cor. 2:9, 'Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit.' Et inde est quod nulla natura creata est sufficiens principium actus meritorii vitae aeternae, nisi praeraddatur aliquod supernaturale donum, quod gratia dicitur." Cf. also *ibid.*, ad 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, a. 3: "Si autem loquamur de opere meritorio secundum quod procedit ex gratia Spiritus Sancti, sic est meritorium vitae aeternae ex condigno. Sic enim valor meriti attenditur secundum virtutem Spiritus Sancti moventis nos in vitam aeternam; secundum illud Ioan. 4:14, 'Fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam

We may then sum up this teaching of St. Thomas by saying that the proper causality of condign merit consists in this: the good act of a just man, who by sanctifying grace is intrinsically oriented to eternal life, merits its reward by striving after what is its connatural goal or object (by a connaturality that is given with grace), namely, the completion of grace in life eternal. This object, however, the just man cannot effect or capture of himself, he can only receive it from God, who alone produces grace in compensation or as a reward for his good action. The connexion between the act and its reward is objective and intrinsic to the action; it is expressed in the very reality of the supernatural act which is ontologically on a level with the goal or reward it strives after. But that adaptation of the act to its supernatural reward presupposes God's disposition which is effectuated in the very granting of sanctifying grace. The important point or the proper characteristic of condign merit lies in the agent's intrinsic virtuality which is commensurate to the object or goal he strives after and attains it by way of merit, that is, as reward.

Causality of Congruous Merit

This intrinsic proportion between act and object is precisely what is absent in congruous merit. The notion of congruous merit is rather undeterminate and applies to disparate realities. St. Thomas himself used it in different contexts, mainly two, which we must briefly recall so as to get at its objective meaning. He speaks of congruous merit, in opposition to condign merit which is itself, as explained above, based on a relative justice only, when considering in the meritorious act its natural reality, an abstraction made from grace:

aeternam.' Attenditur etiam pretium operis secundum dignitatem gratiae, per quam homo, consors factus divinae naturae, adoptatur in filium Dei, sui debetur hereditas ex ipso iure adoptionis, secundum illud Rom. 8 : 17, 'Si filii, et heredes.'"—Both of the ways in which St. Thomas here expresses the equality needed for strict merit in justice, namely, the power of the Holy Spirit who moves us (cf. also *ibid.*, ad 3), and the sharing in the divine nature which the grace of adoptive sonship supposes, convey the same idea: that of an ontological adaptation of man's meritorious actions to their supernatural reward.

If the meritorious act is considered according to its substance as it proceeds from the free will, there can be no condign merit in it, on account of the extreme inequality [between man's act and God's reward]. But there is a congruity, on account of some equality of proportion: it seems fitting that when a man works according to his capacity God rewards him according to the excellence of His own power."³⁵

In this abstractive consideration of the meritorious act, two elements constitute congruous merit: a positive one, the action itself considered in its substance; a negative one (on account of which it is no condign merit), the absence of the intrinsic proportion or adaptation to the supernatural reward-adaptation which grace gives.

Another case of congruous merit, which is no mere abstraction but a real fact, is the just man's power to merit the first grace for another:

Someone can merit the first grace for another by way of congruous merit. When a man in a state of grace does God's will, it is fitting according to the relations of friendship that God does the will of man by saving another: though there can sometimes be an obstacle on the part of him whose justification the saint desires.³⁶

Here again congruous merit supposes a positive supernatural action which strives after a goal beyond its intrinsic power. These are the same two elements as in the previous case. Besides these, a third one enters: the effect of this merit can be frustrated by an obstacle on the part of the other.³⁷

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 3: "Si consideratur secundum substantiam operis, et secundum quod procedit ex libero arbitrio, sic non potest ibi esse condignitas, propter maximam inaequalitatem. Sed est ibi congruitas, propter quamdam aequalitatem proportionis: videtur enim congruum ut homini operanti secundum suam virtutem, Deus recompenset secundum excellentiam suae virtutis." Cf. also *ibid.*, a. 6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, a. 6: "Sed merito congrui potest aliquis mereri alteri primam gratiam. Quia enim homo in gratiam Dei constitutus implet voluntatem Dei, congruum est, secundum amicitiae proportionem, ut Deus impleat hominis voluntatem in salvatione alterius: licet quandoque possit haberi impedimentum ex parte illius cuius aliquis sanctus iustificationem desiderat."

³⁷ To the question whether a just man can merit his own restoration to grace after a future mortal sin (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 7), St. Thomas answers: he cannot merit this restoration either by condign merit, because the movement of

At times St. Thomas seems to bring congruous merit very close to prayer, as though its causality were hardly different from impetration. So for instance, after having answered the question whether a man can merit the first grace for another by saying: he can by way of congruous merit, he answers an objection which intended to prove that he can strictly merit that grace, in the following manner: "The impetration which is proper to prayer rests on God's mercy, condign merit, on justice. That is why a man obtains from God's mercy by praying many things which he does not merit in justice."³⁸

Is there, then, no medium between divine justice and mercy? The analysis of the proper causality of prayer below should answer the question. Meanwhile we retain this: from St. Thomas' use of the notion of congruous merit it appears that this way of supernatural causality is proper to a meritorious act of the just with regard to an object to which it has no intrinsic proportion, yet after which it strives somehow. The absence of this intrinsic adaptation of the act to the reward is what distinguishes this merit from condign merit. It can be due to different causes. For that reason it would seem that each particular case of congruous merit has to be examined

grace is interrupted by the loss of grace; or by congruous merit, for, if a just man's congruous merit of the first grace or restoration to grace in favor of another can be frustrated on account of the obstacle of sin in that other man (cf. *ibid.*, a. 6), then *a fortiori* it can be likewise frustrated when the obstacle of sin is both in the one who merits and in him for whom he merits, this being in the present case one and the same person. The reason why St. Thomas excludes a just man's congruous merit in the case of his own restoration to grace after a future mortal sin seems to be that congruous merit in favor of oneself of necessity goes together with the commensurate disposition for receiving what one so merits, while in the case of congruous merit in favor of another, the disposition for receiving the object of that merit is in another person, and so either they exist together, or the merit itself does not exist. Moreover, supposing that this congruous merit did exist, would it not be "mortified" or rendered ineffective by the mortal sin that follows? At any rate, there is no question in this text of the congruous merit inherent in the supernatural acts which a sinner makes with the help of actual grace, of which cf. below, Appendix I 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 6, ad 2: "Impetratio orationis innititur misericordiae: meritum autem condigni innititur iustitiae. Et ideo multa orando impetrat homo ex divina misericordia, quae tamen non meretur secundum iustitiam." Cf. also *ibid.*, a. 9 c and ad 1; III, q. 2, a. 11.

on its own deserts. Fittingness is an elastic notion. Besides, St. Thomas does not seem to have considered explicitly this particular question: Which spiritual favors, needed for the normal development of the life of grace, can and does a just man by his meritorious acts merit for himself by way of congruous merit? The merit he is really concerned with is condign merit. It is from the implications of his teaching that we shall have to derive the answer to that question.

Causality of Impetration

By praying, St. Thomas says, we can 'impetrate' from God many things which we do not merit. What does impetration mean and what is its proper way of supernatural causality? Prayer is an act of the virtue of religion by which we ask from God becoming things. Such is the traditional definition of the prayer of petition (the only prayer that concerns us here) which St. Thomas makes his own.³⁹ As an act of virtue it is, in the just, also meritorious, and to that extent its effect is common with that of other meritorious actions.⁴⁰ But its proper effect is to impetrate.⁴¹ This means that we obtain what we ask for the asking, because we express our desires, for prayer is the expression of our desires.⁴² How then is it that the expression of a desire is sufficient to obtain its object from God? Has it any causality in obtaining favors from God? We need not repeat here what was said above: prayer does not intend or bring about a change in the dispositions of divine Providence, but to fulfil these dispositions, prayer being one of the second causes through which God's Providence brings His designs to fulfilment.⁴³ What remains to be shown is in what manner prayer as such is a proportionate cause for the obtention of the

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 1 and 3.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, a. 13.

⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*, "Secundus autem effectus orationis est ei proprius, quod est impetrare."

⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, a. 1, ad 1: "petitio . . . quodammodo desiderii interpret"; a. 7, "illud debemus orare quod debemus desiderare"; a. 9, ad 2, "oratio . . . interpret desiderii."

⁴³ Cf. above, nn. 27 and 28.

favors we ask from God. For unless it be so, it cannot, on St. Thomas' principles, exert any real causality, since Providence normally takes second causes for ends that are not above their inherent power.⁴⁴ Is prayer such a proportionate cause with regard to the favors we pray for?

O. Karrer answered this question in the negative, because he said the only effect of prayer is subjective, namely, to dispose the one who prays to accept willingly what God will send him. It is true, prayer has also a subjective effect, but this is not the only one. In the same way as a meritorious act both disposes and merits, so also prayer as such, apart from its being meritorious, disposes and obtains. Its subjective effect in man, St. Thomas says, is conformity with the will of God: "When we ask in our prayer what pertains to salvation [and we should not ask except that], then we conform our wills with the will of God who, it is said, in 1 Tim. 2:4, 'will have all men to be saved,'"⁴⁵ But besides this, prayer also "actively" brings about the obtention of the favors we ask. A first general reason for saying so is, St. Thomas notes,⁴⁶ that God commands us to pray and never to leave off, as Scripture and Tradition tell us. He would not so command us, if prayer were a mere extrinsic condition without any efficacy of its own: God does not command arbitrarily. If He does command, it is because the nature of the things demands such a manner of acting. It is true, St. Thomas teaches, "God grants us many things out of liberality without our asking. But that He wants to grant some things in answer to our prayer, is for our own good: in order that we should conceive confidence in having recourse to Him and acknowledge Him as the Author of all our good."⁴⁷ But besides

⁴⁴ Cf. above, n. 29; *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 2.

⁴⁵ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 5, ad 2: "Cum orando petimus aliqua quae pertinent ad nostram salutem, conformamus voluntatem nostram voluntati Dei, de quo dicitur, 1 ad Tim. 2:4, quod 'vult omnes homines salvos fieri.'"

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, a. 2 sed contra et c.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ad 3: "Deus multa nobis praestat ex sua liberalitate etiam non petita. Sed quod aliqua vult praestare nobis petentibus, hoc est propter nostram utilitatem: ut scilicet fiduciam quamdam accipiamus recurrendi ad Deum, et ut recognoscamus eum esse bonorum nostrorum auctorem."

this subjective gain for us, there should, it would seem, also be an objective effect to our prayer that is the reason why God wants us to pray.

In fact, if we compare prayer and merit, we can see what prayer exactly effects. "Merit," St. Thomas says, "rests on justice, impetration on graciousness."⁴⁸ What God grants in answer to prayer He gives, not in His justice, but in His mercy, goodness, liberality.⁴⁹ As our merit corresponds to His justice, so our expressed need or misery to His mercy. By praying we do on our part what we can to arouse, as it were, God's mercy, just as to our merit corresponds God's justice. This again, as in merit, presupposes God's disposition. But this we know precisely from His command to pray. Not that God is in need of being told about our needs or desires, it is we who must look for divine help in our need.⁵⁰ For whatever therefore we cannot merit from God's justice or "equity," because it can have no intrinsic or objective connexion with our act, all that we can do to secure it is to pray and ask for it. By so doing we obtain a twofold result: we prepare and dispose ourselves for the favors we ask, since prayer is the expression of a desire; and we do on our part what answers to or is required by the mercy of God, by showing our need. And in this manner prayer is a real co-operation with grace and has a supernatural causality, different from that of condign or congruous merit as there is no intrinsic or indirect objective connection between our act of praying and its object, but only the ontological ordination of a need to the cause that will fill it.

Comparison and Synthesis of the Three Causalities

These three ways of our supernatural causality in the de-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 16, ad 2: "Meritum innititur iustitiae, sed impetratio gratiae."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, a. 15, ad 3: "Per fidem habet homo notitiam omnipotentiae divinae et misericordiae, ex quibus oratio impetrat quod petit"; a. 16: "Orationem vero peccatoris ex bono naturae procedentem Deus audit, non quasi ex iustitia, quia peccator hoc non meretur, sed ex pura misericordia"; cf. I-II, q. 114, a. 6, ad 2: "Impetratio orationis innititur misericordiae: meritum autem condigni innititur iustitiae."

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 2 ad 1.

velopment of the life of grace are therefore three degrees of "efficiency" on our part that go in a decreasing order. The highest possible share in supernatural causality we can have is condign merit, where our meritorious act is intrinsically adapted to the object or goal it strives after, the only reason why it does not effectively conquer it being that it is of the very nature of the gifts of grace to be produced effectively by God alone. There is less of our causality in congruous merit; here there is no longer the intrinsic proportion between act and reward, yet there still is an objective, if only indirect connection, in the sense that the congruously meritorious act is a positive striving after the reward and actually posits a reality which is connected with the reward so merited. Finally, in prayer as such, there is no such positive striving after the favor we pray for (because there cannot be in it the objective connection between act and object that is found in merit, as the analysis of the object of prayer will show), there is only the expression of our need and desire.

All these three ways of supernatural causality can be and generally are present in one and the same meritorious act, they are not as such three distinct and separate acts of virtue. One act, say the prayer of a just man, can be at once meriting in a condign and a congruous manner and also be impetrating:⁵¹ not with regard to the same object but with regard to different objects. It is one grace such prayer merits strictly, another that it merits in a fitting manner, another still that it obtains by impetration.⁵² This leads us to the reason of both the distinction and the synthesis of these three ways of supernatural causality.

That reason is not some, as it were arbitrary, disposition of divine Providence which chooses to give some graces in reward for strict merit, others for congruous merit, and a third kind in answer to prayer. The reason lies in the very nature of the

⁵¹ Compare *ibid.*, q. 83, a. 13 on merit and impetration in prayer; also *ibid.*, a. 15. As noted above, p. 11, St. Thomas speaks little of congruous merit; he generally contrasts only merit (in the strict sense) and prayer.

⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, q. 83, a. 15, ad 2.

graces that are needed for the normal development of the life of grace. It is because some of these cannot of their nature be gained except by condign merit or as the connatural goal of the meritorious act; because others can be had only by congruous merit, since they are not the connatural goal of the meritorious act but only connected with that goal; because others still can be obtained by prayer only, as they are neither the connatural end of the meritorious act nor objectively connected with it and so can be given only as a gift and not as a reward: it is for this reason that there are these three different ways in our supernatural causality. This conclusion is perhaps not explicitly stated by St. Thomas; it is certainly implied in the basic principle explained above,⁵³ and in what he says about the objects of merit and prayer.

If it is true that God wants us to co-operate with grace and to be the agents of our own salvation and sanctification as much as we can, then it follows that the reason of the different share in supernatural causality expressed in those three different ways cannot be some arbitrary disposition of divine Providence; such disposition would go against the very intent of the special love of God for His adopted sons: they should take the highest possible share in their own sanctification. The reason can only be the very nature of the graces that are the object of each of the three ways of our supernatural causality.⁵⁴ In fact the study of these objects confirms this conclusion.

Objects of Condign Merit

What is the proper object of condign merit? The most appropriate answer to this question St. Thomas gives when he explains the merit of increase in grace. He says:

The proper object of condign merit is what falls within the reach of the impulse of grace. Now the motion of a mover bears not only

⁵³ Cf. above, nn. 19-22, and pp. 451-453.

⁵⁴ This is moreover also commanded by St. Thomas' realism in conceiving the supernatural order in general and in particular in his concept of divine Providence: God uses things as they are, according to the very nature He gave them, for the execution of His designs.

on the final goal of the movement but on its entire progress. The final goal of the movement of grace is life eternal; its progress is made by the increase of charity and grace, as Prov. 4:18 says, "The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day," which is the day of glory. And so increase in grace is the object of merit.⁵⁵

There is then a twofold object of condign merit: increase in grace and consummation of grace. The reason for this assertion is that these two, and only these two, fall within the reach of the impulse of grace, that is, to these two objects only is the meritorious act adapted or intrinsically proportionate. St. Thomas explained this equation when showing how it is possible for man to merit with God: man can merit that which God gave him the power to strive after as after a proportionate end and reward.⁵⁶ And, St. Thomas teaches, these two, increase and consummation of grace, are the objects of every meritorious act of the just, even though their actual obtention be delayed: "By every meritorious act man merits an increase in grace and the consummation of grace which is life eternal."⁵⁷ The reason is not mysterious. In every meritorious act man tends towards his last end, and he does so by growing in grace: to grow in grace or to draw nearer to the End is one and the same thing.

That these two objects are the only possible ones for condign merit is rather evident in itself. For they are respectively the proximate and the ultimate connatural end of the impulse of grace, in such manner that they are synonymous with these. For all that the meritorious act is after is to reach the end of

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 8: "Illud cadit sub merito condigni, ad quod motio gratiae se extendit. Motio autem alicuius moventis non solum se extendit ad ultimum terminum motus, sed etiam ad totum progressum in motu. Terminus autem motus gratiae est vita aeterna: progressus autem in hoc motu est secundum augmentum caritatis et gratiae, secundum illud Prov. 4:18, 'Iustorum semita quasi lux splendens procedit, et crescit usque ad perfectum diem,' qui est dies gloriae. Sic igitur augmentum gratiae cadit sub merito condigni."

⁵⁶ Cf. above, pp. 8 f. and n. 31.

⁵⁷ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 8, ad 3: "Quolibet actu meritoria meretur homo augmentum gratiae, sicut et gratiae consummationem, quae est vita aeterna."—We do not enter here into the question of the merit of fervent and remiss acts; cf. our article, "Growth in Grace," *Cross and Crown* (1952), 356-65.

grace which is glory, a thing it does by drawing ever closer to that end. This, St. Thomas says, happens in fact by growth in grace and charity: "We advance on the way to the ultimate end of beatitude in the measure that we draw closer to God, to whom we approach not by steps of the body but by interior affections."⁵⁸ Growth in grace and charity and consummation of grace and charity are identically the complete intrinsic goal of the meritorious act; they are therefore the only objects of condign merit.

This exclusiveness is confirmed by St. Thomas' answer by which he sets aside other eventual objects of this merit. So he answers in the negative the questions whether we can merit in a condign manner the first grace, or our restoration to grace after mortal sin, or the gift of perseverance.⁵⁹ And the reason is always the same: they are not the connatural goal of the impulse of grace, either because that impulse of grace does not exist yet or no longer—first grace, or restoration to grace—or because, in the case of perseverance, it is not a goal but a principle of that impulse.

One might doubt perhaps whether temporal favors cannot, according to St. Thomas, be the object of condign merit. For he grants, when examining the question, that:

If temporal goods are considered insofar as they are helpful for virtuous actions by which we are led to eternal life, in that respect they are object of merit "*simpliciter*," just as increase in grace and all those things by which, after the first grace, man is helped along to attain beatitude. For God grants to the just as much temporal goods, and also temporal evils, as is helpful for them to reach eternal life.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 4: "In hac autem via tanto magis procedimus quanto Deo magis propinquamus, cui non appropinquatur passibus corporis sed affectibus mentis."

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, aa. 5, 7, 9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, a. 10: "Si temporalia bona considerantur prout sunt utilia ad opera virtutum, quibus perducimur in vitam aeternam, secundum hoc directe et simpliciter cadunt sub merito: sicut et augmentum gratiae, et omnia illa quibus homo adiuvatur ad perveniendum in beatitudinem, post primam gratiam. Tantum enim dat Deus viris iustis de bonis temporalibus, et etiam de malis, quantum eis expedit ad perveniendum ad vitam aeternam."

Yet, though St. Thomas has here certainly in mind condign or strict merit, the connection of these temporal goods (or evils!) with progress towards the last end, that is, with growth in grace, always remains rather loose and indefinite. It is not of themselves that these goods and evils help one to grow in grace—what is natural can produce no positive effect that is supernatural—but only by way of material causality, in the same sense as nature is presupposed by grace without grace arising from it or being in any way caused by it. Accordingly, in our present-day terminology we should rather say that, to the extent that temporal goods can be the object of merit, it is to congruous merit that they should be referred.

As to the increase and consummation of grace, these are objects of condign merit and of condign merit only; they cannot be had except by way of condign merit (saving always the reception of the sacraments). Neither congruous merit nor impetration can of themselves bring about increase in grace or its consummation. The reason for saying so is not far to find. To grow in grace and reach its fulfilment is nothing else than to draw closer to the End and finally reach It. But, as St. Thomas explains, we, as every being, tend to and reach our End by our actions,⁶¹ and by such actions as are intrinsically adapted to or objectively on the same level as the end.⁶² But congruous merit and impetration are of their nature not so adapted; their very notion implies this lack of intrinsic proportion to progress in grace; they contribute to this progress in an indirect manner only, by securing what is necessary for acts that will produce the growth in grace. If they involved this adaptation they would no longer be congruous merit and impetration; they would be condign merit. Growth in grace and condign merit are synonymous—*convertuntur*.

Objects of Congruous Merit

What, then, will be the proper object of congruous merit in the just? Which gifts of grace which they need for the normal

⁶¹ Cf. *III Cont. Gent.*, cc. 2 sqq.

⁶² Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 2; above, nn. 29, 44.

development of the life of grace can they merit in a congruous manner? As already hinted above, St. Thomas has not explicitly asked and answered this question.⁶³ And contemporary theology offers divergent answers. If we keep to the notion of congruous merit as proposed by St. Thomas, namely, implying two elements: a positive action towards an object, i. e., some ontological link, yet no intrinsic immediate connection and adaptation of the act to the object; and if we view the question in the setting of St. Thomas' philosophy and theology of the free and meritorious act; then we should say, as a logical conclusion from the basic principle that we should collaborate with grace as much as possible: those gifts of grace are the object of congruous merit which, while needed for the development of the life of grace, are not intrinsically connected with the meritorious act, yet have some objective, if only indirect, connection with it. What are these graces? They are mainly of two kinds: primarily the internal sufficient graces needed for subsequent meritorious acts, and secondarily the external graces, that is, external helps of which temporal goods (or evils) are the main constituent and which constitute an exterior invitation to further meritorious acts.

Internal sufficient graces for future meritorious acts are not intrinsically or immediately connected with a present meritorious act—and therefore they are no object of condign merit—because, as St. Thomas teaches, no free act of ours can, as it were, predetermine a future free act; the proper object of a free act is a particular objective determined here and now, in space and time, and nothing more.⁶⁴ What concerns subsequent free acts does not of necessity follow from one free act; the essential indetermination of our free acts precludes a necessary link. But if we could secure those sufficient graces by way of condign merit, there would be such a necessary link between a present meritorious act and the graces needed for future acts,

⁶³ Cf. p. 462.

⁶⁴ Cf. *III Cont. Gent.*, c. 155 (about perseverance): "Potestas enim liberi arbitrii est respectu eorum quae sub electione cadunt; quod autem eligitur est aliquod particulare operabile, particulare autem operabile est quod est hic et nunc. . . ."

and to that extent we would predetermine those acts, since the grace inviting to them would follow of necessity on our present meritorious act. Yet there is an objective indirect link between a present meritorious act and sufficient graces for subsequent meritorious acts. A meritorious act produces an increase in grace (at once, if it is fervent; else when man is sufficiently disposed); and this growth in grace calls connaturally for further growth—because of the essentially dynamic character of our pilgrim grace, ever meant to grow in perfection—⁶⁵ and so it also calls for the sufficient graces needed for further acts that will bring about the further growth. In this manner, therefore, namely through the intermediary of the growth in grace which the meritorious act entails, there is an objective indirect link between that act and sufficient graces for new acts. And so the meritorious act merits those sufficient graces in a congruous manner.

So does it merit the external graces that will second the interior graces in their invitation to new meritorious acts. It is in this sense, it would seem, that we can and have to understand what St. Thomas says about meriting temporal favors.⁶⁶ We merit these by our meritorious acts insofar as they constitute external graces. This merit, it is clear, is only congruous: not only because a meritorious act does not predetermine the graces needed for subsequent acts, but also for the additional reason that these external graces are not as necessary and effective as are interior graces—in fact they obtain their effect only through the intermediary of the interior graces. And so they are object of congruous merit in a less full sense than are interior sufficient graces.

Are there any other objects of congruous merit? In particular, are efficacious graces the object of congruous merit? Though some authors say so—St. Thomas did not ask the question—we should answer in the negative. The nature of efficacious graces excludes their being the object of merit even in the broad or improper sense. For if it is true, as all Catholic

⁶⁵ Cf. Denzinger, 803.

⁶⁶ Cf. above, pp. 469 f.

theologians agree in maintaining whatever be their system of explaining the efficacy of grace, that efficacious grace as such is a gift of God and is granted not in dependence on any previous cause, namely, on a previous free act of ours, but out of pure love of God (as predestination also is entirely gratuitous)—that, in other words, efficacious grace as such is a pure gift and cannot of its nature be a reward—, then the very essence of efficacious graces precludes their being the object of congruous merit. They can be obtained only by prayer.⁶⁷

Objects of Impetration

Accordingly, the proper object of impetration are those gifts of grace which we need for the normal unfolding of the life of grace and which cannot be object of condign or congruous merit. Because they are needed, God is ready, as it were, to give them (what this objectively means, will be explained presently). Because we have to be co-causes with God of our own sanctification, we must do what we can do to secure those graces. Since they cannot, of their nature, be merited whether in a condign or a congruous manner, all that we can do to obtain them is to pray for them. These gifts, therefore, are the proper object of impetration. Which are they? We may reduce them all to three: efficacious graces, gift of perseverance, and in a secondary manner external efficacious graces.

There is hardly any need to show further that efficacious graces are the object of impetration. Since God grants our prayers in His mercy, not in strict or improper justice,⁶⁸ the fact that efficacious grace is granted in answer to prayer does not mar the purity of its gift character—a beggar has no “right” whatever to the alms he receives. Yet our very begging is our way of co-operating in securing those needed graces. And because God wants our co-operation, and in particular commands us to pray for the help we need, the ex-

⁶⁷ It is perhaps because the idea of congruous merit is at times reduced to mean practically the same as impetration that some authors see no difficulty in saying we can thus merit efficacious graces.

⁶⁸ Cf. above, nn. 48-49.

pression of our desire and need is the proper causality we can have in obtaining these gifts, any other being excluded from the very nature of things.

As to the gift of perseverance which besides a series of efficacious graces includes the grace of a happy death, St. Thomas explicitly teaches that, because we cannot merit this gift, we must pray to obtain it, and that we can obtain it by prayer. "God grants the gift of perseverance gratis to any one who receives it."⁶⁹ "Those things also which we do not merit we obtain by praying. . . . And so by asking one obtains the gift of perseverance, either for himself or for another, though it is not the object of merit."⁷⁰ Because a man is in need of the help of grace to persevere in the state of grace, "one must after justification beg of God the aforesaid gift of perseverance."⁷¹ There is, on our part, no other way of contributing to its obtention.

Finally, external graces in the shape of those providential circumstances that sustain our effort in doing good and to no small extent, as it were, compel us to practise virtue, can also be obtained by prayer. They are a secondary object of impetration. Generally they are beyond our own power and independent on our own choice and activity. But by prayer we obtain from divine Providence the favorable circumstances that help us to do good. To that extent these temporal favors are helpful for our spiritual good and may be prayed for in the same way as they may be desired.⁷²

⁶⁹ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 9: "Deus gratis perseverantiae donum largitur, cuicumque illud largitur."

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, ad 1: "Etiam ea quae non meremur, orando impetramus. . . . Et similiter perseverantiae donum aliquis petendo a Deo impetrat vel sibi vel alii, quamvis sub merito non cadat."

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, q. 109, a. 10: "Postquam aliquis iustificatus est per gratiam, necesse habet a Deo petere praedictum perseverantiae donum." Cf. also, *De Verit.*, q. 24, a. 13; *III Cont. Gent.*, c. 155; and our article on "Prayer for Perseverance," *Cross and Crown*.

⁷² Cf. *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 6.

Unity and Certainty of this Threefold Supernatural Causality

We should now be able to see the intrinsic cohesion of these three manners of our supernatural causality in the life of grace. The whole development of the life of grace is the outcome of two causalities: in the first place, that of God who wills our salvation and sanctification, who as St. Thomas says, moves us to the final goal of eternal life.⁷³ This is one and indifferentiated in God; the differentiation is only in its effects in us. On our part, our co-operation is required to grow in grace unto its consummation. That growth is *the* reality in us of the unfolding of the life of grace. Accordingly, the first and in a way the only thing required of us is the acts by which we grow in grace: meritorious acts that merit the growth in a condign manner. The remainder is subordinate and directed to these. Sufficient graces are needed for never halting growth by new acts: every growth calls for these; and we secure them by the very acts by which we grow in grace. But these new acts, even given the sufficient graces, will not actually come about without efficacious graces which are God's pure gift; and these we obtain by praying. But all of these three objects: increase in grace, sufficient actual graces, efficacious actual graces (till perseverance), are equally included in the one divine motion, or the divine will of our sanctification and final salvation, since all three of them are equally necessary for our life of grace to develop as it should. There is no lesser will in God of the graces we merit in a congruous manner or pray for than of those we merit by condign merit.

This also shows that the certainty and efficacy of these three ways of supernatural causality is the same. The difference between them is not one of certainty and efficacy in obtaining the effects but one of objects. Prayer—when it is what it should be—⁷⁴ is no less efficacious and infallible in obtaining what it prays for than condign merit in securing its reward. And congruous merit gets its rewards with equal certainty as

⁷³ Cf. *ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, aa. 3, 8.

⁷⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 15, ad 2.

condign merit. The distinction of congruous merit into fallible and infallible⁷⁵ does not seem to be a happy or a necessary one. And the reason for this equal certainty and efficacy is the oneness of the divine will regarding our sanctification. It is only because of the different nature of the diverse gifts of grace which we need and which are granted by God and which of their very essence command on our part different manners of co-operating, that we distinguish on our part: condign merit, congruous merit and impetration. All these three forms of our co-operation therefore have a necessary place in the life of grace.

Appendix I: Supernatural Causality of Sinners

The same basic principle holds good here: God wants sinners also to be the cause of their own salvation as much as they can; they also must co-operate with grace for their return to the state of justice.

1) Since they are not in the state of sanctifying grace, they cannot have any supernatural causality by way of condign merit. Condign merit entails growth and consummation of grace and so presupposes that grace in him who merits.

2) Sinners can, however, merit in a congruous manner, by acts made with the help of actual grace. In their case, this congruous merit is not an accidental aspect of a strictly meritorious act, and so the objective and indirect connection that exists between the act and the object it merits is different from that of congruous merit in the just. And it is different for each of the three objects of this merit. a) The grace of justification for which the acts of virtue made with the help of actual grace gradually prepare the sinners is objectively and mediately connected with these acts insofar as these acts produce an ever growing perfection of attrition that is to lead up to contrition, and this growing attrition is the intermediary link which, in the absence of an intrinsic proportion of the acts to the grace of

⁷⁵ As proposed, v. g., by Van Noort, *De Gratia Christi*, n. 198; Pesch, *Praelectiones dogmaticae, De Gratia*, n. 427.

justification, constitutes an objective connection between the two, the foundation of congruous merit. b) Further sufficient graces needed for new virtuous acts which must effect this gradual approach to the grace of justification by growing perfection in attrition, are also connected objectively and mediately with present acts of virtue. Though these sufficient graces are not the goal of these acts but rather the principle of new acts, yet through the intermediary link of a growth in attrition which calls for further progress in attrition until contrition and the grace of justification are reached, and so calls also for further acts for which further actual graces are needed, these graces are connected with the present virtuous acts that merit them in a congruous manner. c) In the same manner, but with a less stringent connection, these acts merit external sufficient graces that are the normal external setting for interior graces.

3) Further, sinners can and must obtain by prayer made with the help of actual grace the efficacious actual graces for the acts that prepare them for justification. They are in need of these graces, and God wants to give them these indispensable helps for their return to the state of grace; these efficacious graces cannot be merited but only impetrated. In addition to these interior efficacious graces, sinners can also obtain by prayer, as a secondary object of impetration, the external efficacious graces or such providential circumstances as help them effectively for their return to God.

This twofold way of a sinner's co-operation with grace for his conversion, commanded by the nature of the twofold help of grace he is in need of, is demanded by the one divine motion leading sinners to repentance: His salvific will in their behalf. It is their supernatural causality by which they become, subordinately to and dependently on God, the artisans of their own conversion.

Appendix II: Supernatural Causality in Favor of Others

The basic principle of the social aspect of men's salvation and sanctification, consequence of the redemptive Incarnation, may

be stated as follows: God wants men to be the cause of their neighbor's salvation and sanctification as much as they can. When members of the Mystical Body of Christ act in a supernatural manner, they act as members and so have a supernatural influence on other members.

This social supernatural causality is evidently different in the just and in sinners.

I. *In the Just*

The reality of their supernatural causality in favor of others may be best shown in the following manner. When growing in grace, by virtue of their strictly meritorious actions, the just grow in charity, that is to say, not only in the first place in love of God but also in the second place in love of their neighbor. They grow in love of God, that is, in wishing God well or in love of benevolence; and they grow in love of neighbor or in well-wishing and benevolence towards him. This goodwill towards their neighbor is the foundation of their congruous merit in his favor. And so this merit is entailed in every growth of theirs in sanctifying grace, as a general influence on all the members of the Mystical Body. It can be and often is specified in its application to certain persons by their particular intentions. Accordingly:

1) The just cannot merit in favor of others in a condign manner, because their own meritorious acts produce an increase in grace only in themselves, not in other persons. They themselves grow by their own activity; they cannot directly make others grow. Condign merit is strictly personal (except only in Christ, Head of the Mystical Body, who did merit for us in a condign manner).

2) They can merit in favor of others in a congruous manner. There is an objective connection between their strictly meritorious acts and some spiritual favors God grants to others on account of these merits of the just, namely, the "*proportio amicitiae*,"⁷⁶ the laws of friendship which entail that God meets

⁷⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 6.

the growing fraternal charity of the just, by which they desire more spiritual good for their neighbor, by granting the graces they wish for their neighbor. The connection is different from that in congruous merit of the just for themselves: first in general, since it is not the connection with their actions of the necessary help for their own further growth in grace but for their neighbor; and then in particular for each case of graces that can be so merited for their neighbor. These graces are mainly of two kinds: the sufficient graces needed for good actions; and in favor of sinners, the first grace or grace of justification, which is generally first prepared by the actual graces needed for the acts of virtue preparatory to justification, and then granted in the grace of actual conversion.

3) They can obtain in favor of others, by way of impetration, those graces which they cannot merit for them and which yet, out of charity, they desire for them.⁷⁷ Their growth in charity is the foundation of the impetratory value of their prayers for the neighbor. The graces which the just can so obtain for others are actual efficacious graces which lead either to justification in the case of sinners, or in the case of the just, to growth in grace and perseverance.

Both the congruous merit and the prayer of the just in favor of others can remain frustrated in their effect on account of an obstacle to grace in them, namely, when the neighbors are indisposed and refuse grace. That is why prayer in favor of others is not always granted.

II. *In Sinners*

Though in a lesser measure than the just, sinners also can have a supernatural causality in favor of their neighbor, namely, to the extent that they are and act as members of the Body of Christ, through faith and hope, or even as potential members acting as such with the help of actual grace. But in the absence in them of supernatural charity, this merit or prayer of sinners in favor of others is less perfect and effective than in the just.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 7.

The foundation of this supernatural causality in favor of others, which in the just is their growing charity for their neighbor, is otherwise in sinners. To the extent that their growing attrition is a growing beginning of love and a sort of desire of charity, their approach to justification and to charity both of God and of their neighbor is a beginning supernatural benevolence in his favor.

Accordingly, both congruous merit and prayer of sinners in favor of others is less efficacious than those of the just. What was said above of the just applies in a restricted sense to sinners.

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THE LIBERAL ARTS IN THE ARISTOTELIAN- THOMIST SCHEME OF KNOWLEDGE

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I PROPOSE in the present study to do five things: 1) to raise the specifically philosophical problems which present themselves when one attempts to integrate the Stoic-originated notion of "liberal arts" with the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of human knowledge, leaving aside the numerous historical and pedagogical problems connected with this Stoic notion; 2) to review the general Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge, so as to discover the materials which supply an eventual answer to the philosophical problems listed in the first section; 3) to apply that Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge to the actual solution of each of those philosophical problems; 4) to raise the question how history and the humanities fit into either the notion of the liberal arts or the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge and, in answering that question, to suggest a revision of the content of the *quadrivium*; 5) to indicate briefly that actual college and university practice in America is consistent with the revision of the *quadrivium* here proposed. I shall suggest that, so far as the content of the *quadrivium* goes, theory lags behind practice—a common enough situation in education where changes, necessitated by common sense, are disguised as the continuance of tradition through the simple device of employing an ancient rhetoric. The fact that the ancient rhetoric is totally inapplicable to the new realities bothers no one, for it is very easy first to blur the exact meaning of a given term, and then surreptitiously to make it mean exactly the opposite of its proper connotation. The situation becomes doubly absurd when the ancient theory and its rhetoric are themselves defective, and present practice is sound.¹

¹ I must at the outset acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rev. B. Mullahy,

I. THE PROBLEMS

1. The first problem which confronts anyone familiar with the Aristotelian-Thomist philosophy when he tries to understand the notion of the liberal arts is this: the phrase itself is quite meaningless, a patent contradiction in terms. Liberal knowledge is theoretical knowledge, knowledge sought for its own sake.² Art is productive knowledge, a proper account of how to make something, know-how regarding the transformation of external matter.³ Now just as an animal could not possibly be both rational and infra-rational simultaneously, so knowledge could not possibly be both theoretical and non-theoretical, but productive, simultaneously.

2. The second problem arises from the fact that the liberal arts—grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy—are neither arts nor liberal knowledge. They are not arts because, as we saw above, art is productive knowledge, a making which passes into external matter, as in the useful or fine arts. But the liberal arts do not make anything, transform no external matter. Neither are they liberal knowledge. For liberal knowledge, as we also saw above, is sought for its own sake but these logical and mathematical arts, called liberal, are sought for the sake, not of themselves, but of the theoretical knowledge to which they lead; hence the names *trivium* and *quadrivium*. They are propaedeutic, related as means to a further intellectual end.⁴

C.S.C., whose remarkable article, "The Nature of the Liberal Arts" (*THE NEW SCHOLASTICISM*, XXII, [1949] 361-386) is the most intelligent analysis of this much discussed topic that I have ever read. I can merely raise the questions which begin where Fr. Mullahy leaves off.

² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 2 (982 b 25); St. Thomas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3.

³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VI, 3-7 (1139 b 14—1141 b 14); *Meta.*, VI, 1 (1025 b 22-25); St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 57, a. 3.

⁴ Aristotle so views logic in *Meta.*, II, 2 (995 a 12-14). Aquinas so views all of the liberal arts in *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 2 and 3. Naturally Aristotle has no position on the liberal arts as such, since this Stoic conception is altogether foreign to him.

3. The third problem is that at least five of the seven liberal arts have no subject matter which is proper to them. This is seen most readily by considering the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* separately. First, the *quadrivium*.

Arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy comprise the *quadrivium*. The first two clearly are branches of mathematics. The last is a branch of what we call physical science and of what Aristotle called physics. Music presents a problem. If it means the physics of sound, it is a branch of physics in both the Aristotelian and the modern sense of that term. If it means instrumental music, it is one of the fine arts. If it means choral singing, it is a branch of one or other of the fine arts—perhaps the dance, perhaps poetry. However we understand “music,” it belongs to a category of knowledge other than the liberal arts. To simplify this discussion we shall assume that music means the physics of sound. It thus turns out that two of the arts contained in the *quadrivium* are instances of mathematics, and the remaining two are instances of physical science.

Now as we saw above, the liberal arts are not theoretical knowledge, they are propaedeutic to theoretical knowledge. Yet physics and mathematics are two of the three kinds of theoretical knowledge enumerated by Aristotle and Aquinas on the basis of the three degrees of abstraction,⁵ described in the next section. Since the physics of sound and astronomy belong to physics, and since arithmetic and geometry belong to mathematics, there is simply no subject matter proper to the *quadrivium*.

The *trivium* comes off somewhat better. Grammar, as a liberal art, usually has been interpreted to mean the study of literature. Now literature is one of the fine arts. Hence grammar, as a liberal art, has no proper subject matter. But rhetoric, the art of persuasion, and logic, the art of second intentions,

⁵ Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 2 (193 b 21-194 b 15); *Meta.*, VI, 1 (1025 b 1-1026 a 3); XI, 3 and 4 (1061 a 4-33); XI, 7 (1064 b 1-6); Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5; *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 40, a. 3; I, q. 85, a. 1, ad 1 and 2.

do, as liberal arts, seem to have a subject matter not proper to any other category of knowledge.

The upshot of the present consideration is that, so far as proper content or subject matter is concerned, there are at most two liberal arts, namely, rhetoric and logic. But the two problems urged above can be cited even against rhetoric and logic.

II. THE ARISTOTELIAN-THOMIST SCHEME OF KNOWLEDGE

A. *Theoretical and practical intellect.*⁶

Intellect tends not only to know, but also to cause action on the basis of its knowledge. Inasmuch as it knows, it is named theoretical intellect; inasmuch as, in union with appetite, it extends itself into the realm of operation, does something about what it knows, it is named practical intellect. Intellect is two-faced. On the one hand, it is contemplative, preoccupied with things as they are in themselves. On the other hand, it is concerned with things as they ought to be, with the matters which are proper not to human contemplation, but to human control, with the transformation of the self, of society, and even of the material universe. Intellect, to be brief, is both theoretical and practical.

As theoretical, it is concerned with the realm of truth sought for its own sake, with truth which man discovers but does not make, with given and invariable truth. As practical, intellect is concerned with operational truth, with states of affairs which human thinking makes to be, and therefore makes to be true, with variable, contingent and humanly controlled truth; not with *veritas* but with *verificatio*. So, for example, metaphysics is a work of intellect as theoretical, but morals is a work of intellect as practical.

⁶ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VI, 1-2 (1138 b 15-1139 b 13); *De Anima*, III, 10 (433 a 14); *Meta.*, II, 1 (993 b 21); Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 4; q. 14, a. 16; q. 53, a. 3; q. 79, a. 11; *De Veritate*, q. 3, a. 3; *De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 5, ad 10 and 11; q. 3, a. 1, ad 13.

B. *The kinds of theoretical knowledge: the three degrees of abstraction.*⁷

The knowledge achieved by theoretical intellect is of three kinds, distinguished according to the degree of its remotion, its abstraction, from matter. These three kinds of theoretical knowledge are named physics (the first degree of abstraction), mathematics (the second degree of abstraction), and metaphysics (the third degree of abstraction).

Physics is the study of becoming, of being as changeable. It so concentrates on the nature of changeable being as to be forced to neglect the individual characteristics of the changeable being. That is to say, it leaves aside at least one of the results of matter, namely, individuation. Yet what it studies, mobile being, must both exist in, and be conceived as existing in, matter. Under this term "physics" is included all of the physical sciences, all of the biological sciences, and the philosophy of nature, both in general (cosmology) and also of living nature (philosophical psychology).

Mathematics is the study of being as quantified. It so concentrates on the quantity of the changing, individual things of this world as to be forced to leave aside not only their individual characteristics but also their changes and all their sensible qualities. Mathematics thus is unconcerned with at least two results of matter, namely, individuation and all sensible properties, especially change. Yet what it studies—quantified being—can exist only in matter, even though it is conceived apart from any explicit relation to matter. Thus we can conceive of "two" without conceiving explicitly "eggs" or "shoes," even though it is only eggs, shoes, and material things generally, which are numerable.⁸

⁷ For references to Aristotle and Aquinas, see footnote 4, above. To dwell on the notable differences between the Aristotelian and the Thomist teachings on the degrees of abstraction would distract from our principal concern. See the "Introduction" to *The Division and Methods of the Sciences* by Rev. Armand Maurer (Toronto, 1953).

⁸ I merely report the Aristotelian-Thomist analysis of mathematics. I am incompetent to evaluate its validity relatively to recent developments in mathematics.

Metaphysics is the study of being as being, of being as existing. It so concentrates on the existence of what is as to be forced to leave aside every result of matter-individuation, sensible qualities including change, and quantity. What it studies—existing being—can not only be conceived apart from matter but can also be, apart from matter. That is to say, existing being is not necessarily material being. Under metaphysics is included epistemology, ontology, and natural theology.

C. *The virtues of the theoretical intellect.*⁹

Intermediate between the powers of the human soul and the operations proper to those powers are the virtues, the good habits, which are permanent qualities disposing the powers to suitable operations. These virtues are operational tendencies, perfecting the respective powers of intellect and will in one or other of the many operational directions open to spiritual powers.

Theoretical intellect has three such virtues, namely, understanding, science, and wisdom. Understanding is the intuitive grasp of self-evident first principles, or basic truths of the theoretical order. It, therefore, undergirds the whole structure of theoretical knowledge since it deals with the absolute beginnings of theory.

Science is the habit of demonstrating conclusions in some specified area of theoretical knowledge. It is the capacity to proceed, in the light of the first principles, from the data available about a given subject matter to the proper causes of those data. If understanding is intuitive, science, on the contrary, is rational, inferential.

Wisdom, finally, is the habit of determining the ultimate causes of all things. It sees things whole, in all their rich diversities but yet also in all their connectedness, as proceeding from a common cause. Wisdom looks to the differences between

⁹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VI, 3, 6, 7 (1139 b 14-35; 1140 b 30-1141 b 23); *Posterior Analytics*, I, 1-3 (71 a 1-73 a 20), II, 19 (99 b 15-100 b 18); Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 57, a. 2; *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1.

beings which originate precisely in their proportionately common being; sees that that in which all things are similar is precisely that which makes them to differ.

Mere intellectual neatness suggests at this time that, since there are three kinds of theoretical knowledge (physics, mathematics and metaphysics), and three virtues of the speculative intellect (understanding, science, and wisdom), there is, very likely, a direct correlation between them such that understanding is the virtue proper to physics, science to mathematics, wisdom to metaphysics.

But here, as elsewhere, mere neatness has to be resisted. True, wisdom is, in the natural order, the virtue proper to metaphysics; but the two other correlations are false. Both physics and mathematics require that their practitioner have the virtue of science, since both require the ability to demonstrate conclusions; as does metaphysics, also. Similarly, both physics and mathematics require their practitioner to have the virtue of understanding, since both require that he be able to grasp the starting points of his demonstrations; as does metaphysics also. Metaphysics, then, requires all three virtues, though it alone requires wisdom. Physics and mathematics require the first two of these virtues.

The reason why the virtues are not correlated to the degrees of abstraction in a 1:1 relationship is that the division of theoretical knowledge is an answer to a quite different problem than is the division of the virtues of the theoretical intellect. This difference is suggested by saying that the division of theoretical knowledge is an account of differences in the object known, whereas the division of the virtues of the theoretical intellect is an account of differences in operations performed.¹⁰

D. *The kinds of practical knowledge: doing and making.*¹¹

As theoretical intellect gives rise to three kinds of knowledge and is the subject of three virtues, so practical intellect gives

¹⁰ In *Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VI, 2, 4, 5 (1139 a 21-1139 b 13; 1140 a 1-1140 b 30); Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 57, aa. 3, 4, 5.

rise to two kinds of knowledge (practical and productive) and is the subject of two virtues (prudence and art).

The realm of practical knowledge is, as we saw above, the realm of knowledge about human operation, about matters subject to human control; it is the realm of variable truth, of contingency and verification. Now there are two orders in which man may properly exercise control, in which human operation determines what shall be. One is the order of "doing," the other of "making." Knowledge about doing is named practical knowledge, and knowledge about making is named productive knowledge. Thus the word "practical" denominates both a genus which includes the species productive, and also a species which is distinguished from the productive.

Practical knowledge, or doing, is concerned with voluntary, deliberate, human acts, with the immanent operation of choice, and with the results of that operation. In terms of the ten Aristotelian categories, doing pertains to the category of quality, and not of action. Practical knowledge, then, is non-constructive knowledge sought for the sake of the rational operation of choice. It is the domain of what man makes of himself, individually and socially. It is concerned with the good of man, with a view to making the good man. The principal instances of practical knowledge would seem to be moral philosophy and the social sciences. By the latter term I mean sociology, politics, law, psychology, and economics.

Productive knowledge, or making, is concerned with the transient action of transforming external matter. It falls under the Aristotelian category of action and is essentially constructive. It refers to man's dynamic relations of transformation to the material universe. It is the domain of what man makes of and in the universe of matter. It is the realm of technique, of know-how, and is concerned with the good, not of man, but of man's work, and aims, not at a good man but at a good work, a good product. The principal instances of productive knowledge are the useful arts, the fine arts, and, it is alleged, the liberal arts.

The useful arts have as their end man's own bodily well-being, and they transform matter only with a view to this end. They involve constructions made *by* the mind, *for* the body, *in* external matter. There would seem to be four basic useful arts, each susceptible of numerous subdivisions: 1) the acquisitive arts, which look to the discovery of matter suitable for transformation into bodily utilities; 2) the productive or directly transforming arts, which change raw materials into bodily utilities; 3) the distributive arts, which set up systems of exchange with a view to placing the produced utility in the hands of the prospective consumer; 4) the consumptive or medical arts which study bodily well-being, and in the light of that, regulate the consumption of the produced and acquired bodily utilities. Thus the whole realm of the useful arts is in the category of useful goods. That is, these arts not only produce useful goods, but are themselves useful goods ordained as means to the end of bodily health, which is a valuable good.

The fine arts—architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, drama, the dance, music—are, on the other hand, in the realm of pleasurable or enjoyable goods. That is, these arts not only produce enjoyable goods—things desired for their own sake, and therefore as ends, not as means; yet increasing the intrinsic worth of their possessor in no way, and so not valuable goods—but are themselves enjoyable goods. They involve constructions *by* the mind, *for* the mind, but *in* matter. They are concerned with the transformation of matter for the well-being, not of the body, but of the soul.

Finally, the liberal arts involve constructions *by* the mind, *for* the mind, *in* the mind. Of all the arts they are at the furthest removed from matter, and unlike the useful and the fine arts, do not involve transient action but rather, like theoretical and practical knowledge, immanent operation. Moreover, they are valuable goods—goods desired for their own sake and increasing the intrinsic worth of their possessor—and are productive of valuable goods.

E. *Two virtues of the practical intellect.*¹²

Practical intellect, then, gives rise to two kinds of knowledge, practical and productive. It is also the subject of two virtues, prudence and art. In the case of practical intellect there is a direct correlation between the two types of knowledge and the two virtues. Prudence is the virtue relative to practical knowledge and art is the virtue relative to productive knowledge. In both cases the function of the virtue is to apply the principles of the knowledge to concrete existent situations. So moral philosophy is a work of practical knowledge and the solution of a concrete problem of conscience is a work of prudence. Similarly the principles of sculpting are a work of productive knowledge, and the production of a given sculpture in a given material is a work of art.

F. *Summary.*

It would seem possible at this time to outline the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge according to the aspect of intellect involved, kind of knowledge, and correlative virtue or virtues, as follows:

ASPECT	KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE	VIRTUES
Intellect {	1. Theoretical {	1. Wisdom
	2. Practical {	2. Science
	3. Physics {	3. Understanding
	a. Philosophy of nature including human nature	
	b. Biological sciences	
	c. Physical sciences	
	1. Practical knowledge {	1. Prudence
	a. Moral philosophy	
	b. Social sciences	
	2. Productive knowledge {	2. Art
	a. Liberal Arts	
	b. Fine Arts	
	c. Useful Arts	

¹² For references to Aristotle and Aquinas see footnote 9, above.

There are two obvious omissions from this scheme, theology and history. Theology presents no real problem, since it is an eminent science which includes in its transcendence the formalities both of theoretical knowledge and of practical knowledge.¹³ Insofar as it is theoretical knowledge it is wisdom in a sense higher than metaphysics is.¹⁴

History is a much more complex problem—so complex as to require separate treatment later in this article.

III. THE PLACE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS IN THE ARISTOTELIAN-THOMIST SCHEME OF KNOWLEDGE: SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS.

In the light of the review of the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge just completed, it is now possible to deal with the problems raised in the first section of this study.

1. The first problem was that the very phrase “liberal arts” is a contradiction in terms, inasmuch as liberal knowledge means theoretical knowledge, sought for its own sake, whereas art means productive or constructive knowledge, sought for the sake of making something. One and the same instance of knowledge cannot be both liberal (theoretical, non-constructive) and art (non-theoretical, constructive).

Yet the fact is that the *trivium* (the logical arts) and the *quadrivium* (the mathematical arts)¹⁵ are both arts and liberal, both constructive and theoretical knowledge.

First, they are arts. The essence of art, of productive knowledge, is that it be constructive, that it be a knowledge of how to make something. Now in logic the mind knows how to make something, namely, a demonstration; therefore it is productive knowledge, an art. But in mathematics similarly the mind knows how to make something—numbers in arithmetic, plane

¹³ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, a. 6.

¹⁵ For the moment, I follow Aquinas in assimilating the *trivium* to logic and the *quadrivium* to mathematics (see *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3 and *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 57, a. 3, ad 3). Individual consideration of the seven liberal arts occurs later in this section.

figures in geometry. Hence mathematics too is productive knowledge, and art. Yet logic and mathematics are arts in a minimal sense. For in all other instances, art means knowing how to make a construction in external matter.

Second, logic and mathematics are liberal or theoretical knowledge. The deepest reason for this assertion is that what the mind knows in these two disciplines is precisely its own constructions. This is clear even from the definition of logic: the art of second intentions. But it is clear too from the definition of mathematics, of the second degree of abstraction: the knowledge of things which cannot exist in the way in which they are conceived. Now liberal knowledge is theoretical knowledge, that is, purely intellectual knowledge, sought neither for doing nor for making. In logic and mathematics it is not a question of knowing for the sake of making, it is a question of making for the sake of knowing. Essentially, then, these disciplines are theoretical, liberal, are knowledge sought for the sake of knowing. The constructive aspect is instrumental, though genuine: for these are constructs *by* the mind, *for* the mind, and *in* the mind. Because they are, unlike the servile arts, constructions *for* the mind, and, unlike the fine arts, constructions *in* the mind, they are exclusively intellectual and therefore liberal. Yet they are liberal in a minimal sense, just as they are arts in a minimal sense. For in no other instance is theoretical knowledge a knowledge of mental constructs. Theory, in general, means a knowledge of reality as it is in itself, through such constructs as concepts and propositions. But logic and mathematics are instances of theory in which the construct is the object known.

The liberal arts illustrate admirably the principle of hierarchy: the highest of a lower order (art) borders on the lowest of the higher order (theory). The liberal arts are the highest of the arts because they are the most intellectual. They are the lowest instance of theory because, while they are knowledge for its own sake, they involve construction to achieve the knowledge. The notion of liberal arts, then, is neither a contradiction, nor a confusion of different orders, nor an *ad hoc*

solution to an embarrassing difficulty: it is rather the ordered meeting of two different realms, somewhat as human nature is the ordered meeting of the realm of spirit and the realm of sensuality. There is liberal knowledge in physics or metaphysics which is not at all art, because it is non-constructive knowledge for the sake of knowing. There is art in the useful or fine arts which is not at all liberal (theoretical), because it is knowledge for the sake of making. But there is also an intermediate knowledge which is theoretical-constructive, and which is therefore liberal arts knowledge.¹⁶

2. The second problem was that the liberal arts are neither liberal nor arts. They are not arts because in them there is no making which passes into external matter. They are not liberal knowledge because they are propaedeutic relatively to purely theoretical knowledge; and it is essential to liberal or theoretical knowledge that it be sought for its own sake.

But it is now clear that, while there is in the liberal arts no making which passes into external matter, still there is making. The very thing known in them is a construct of the mind; a syllogism in logic, a number or a figure in mathematics. Hence they are arts in a minimal sense.

Theoretical knowledge is knowledge sought for its own sake. But this defining phrase is ambiguous. It might mean either of two things: (a) knowledge sought neither for doing nor for making but solely for the sake of knowing; (b) knowledge which has no character of ordination relatively to higher, purely intellectual, disciplines.

Of all man's natural knowledge, metaphysics alone is theoretical in both senses.¹⁷ But physics and the liberal arts are theoretical in the first sense though not in the second. For both physics and the liberal arts, while sought for the sake of knowing, are also related to further disciplines. Hence the liberal arts are theoretical knowledge because they are purely intellectual, are knowledge sought for its own sake. Just as there are degrees

¹⁶ In *Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3; *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 57, a. 3, ad 3.

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Meta.*, I, 1, 2 (981 b 21; 982 a 1; 982 a 14-17; 982 b 25); St. Thomas, *I Metaphys.*, Lect. 3 (n. 58).

of art according to which the servile arts are most fully art and the liberal arts most tenuously so, so there are degrees of theory according to which metaphysics is most fully theory and the liberal arts are most tenuously so.

3. The third problem is more substantial, especially as it bears on the *quadrivium*. That problem was this: except for rhetoric and logic, the liberal arts have no proper subject matter. That problem should be even more pressing after our earlier review of the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge. For it is quite clear that arithmetic and geometry (mathematics) pertain to the second degree of abstraction and therefore to purely theoretical or liberal knowledge; and that astronomy and music (the physics of sound) belong to the first degree of abstraction and, therefore, to purely theoretical or liberal knowledge.

Let us, however, begin with the *trivium*. Rhetoric and logic, it is agreed, have a proper subject matter. Now if grammar be understood to mean literature, then it has no proper subject matter, for literature is one of the fine arts. But there is no compelling necessity to understand grammar in this way. One might quite reasonably interpret it to mean the study of language, the art of second impositions. In this meaning grammar is a liberal art. It is an art because it deals with the intellectually constructed symbols of thought. It is liberal, theoretical, because it is studied for purely intellectual purposes, though ordained to higher intellectual disciplines. To understand grammar in this modest way is to give it a proper subject matter, and to assure its status as a liberal art. But so understood, grammar is not a liberal art suited to collegiate or university study: it belongs where it used to be—in the grammar school.

But no juggling of meanings will save the *quadrivium*. The fact is that astronomy and the physics are in no sense whatever liberal arts; they are liberal or theoretical knowledge of the first degree of abstraction. It will be recalled that purely liberal knowledge differs from liberal arts knowledge in this: in the

latter, what is known is an intellectual construct; in the former, what is known is reality itself, through such constructs as concepts and propositions. Astronomy and the physics of sound are purely liberal knowledge, and not at all liberal arts knowledge. It would have helped enormously if Aquinas had said so when he attempted to synthesize the Aristotelian scheme of knowledge with the Stoic notion of the liberal arts.

There is however some reason for considering arithmetic and geometry to be liberal arts, as well as purely theoretical knowledge of the second degree of abstraction. Insofar as what we know in mathematics are mental constructs (numbers and figures), mathematics is a liberal art. But insofar as through these constructs is known a real aspect (quantity) of the real world, mathematics is a purely liberal knowledge and not a liberal arts knowledge. Just as liberal arts knowledge is intermediate between art and theory, so mathematics is intermediate between liberal arts knowledge and purely liberal knowledge.

But if mathematics is both pure theory and also liberal art, which is it primarily? Since the constructs are for the sake of understanding the real quantity of a real universe, the liberal art character of mathematics is subordinated to its purely liberal character. Primarily and directly, mathematics is purely liberal or theoretical knowledge, and only secondarily is it liberal arts knowledge.¹⁸

4. It remains then that, relatively to the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge, the concept of liberal arts is perfectly valid in itself. But this concept is realized only in the case of the *trivium*, and not at all, or only in a secondary and partial manner, in the case of the *quadrivium*. If the Stoic conception of liberal arts can be inserted into the Aristotelian scheme of knowledge only so unsatisfactorily, so haltingly, why did the astute Aquinas attempt the insertion at all? Why not

¹⁸ It must be recalled that the present discussion occurs within an Aristotelian-Thomist frame of reference. If one were to accept the account of mathematics given by Russell, and the account of physical science given by logical positivists (both of which seem quite reasonable to the writer), it would not be difficult to establish both mathematics and physical science as liberal arts.

say simply: "This Stoic conception has, no doubt, a partial validity of its own. But it is inassimilable to the Aristotelian division of knowledge. It is therefore complementary to the Aristotelian division, but not open to fusion with it."

Anyone other than Aquinas can at best conjecture an answer: but a conjecture can be more or less reasonable. One likely conjecture suggests itself. Aristotle held that physics is the first degree of abstraction, and that mathematics is the second. But he was much too sensible to confuse a metaphysical ordering with a pedagogical blueprint, so he never taught that the study of physics should precede the study of mathematics. Quite the reverse—the study of mathematics should precede the study of physics. The proper sequence of studies, according to Aristotle,¹⁹ is logic first; mathematics second; physics third; morals fourth; metaphysics last. Aquinas concurred in this educational sequence emphatically.²⁰ Now by interpreting the *trivium* to mean logic, and the *quadrivium* to mean mathematics, and by treating the liberal arts as a whole as propaedeutic to purely theoretical knowledge, Aquinas could adduce a theoretical justification for his practical conviction that the study of mathematics (second degree of abstraction) should actually precede the study of physics (first degree of abstraction). Thus Aquinas made a sensible and persuasive use of materials at hand to justify a simple enough proposition: mathematics should precede physics. But to be persuasive is, unfortunately, not necessarily the same as being analytically correct. In any event, Aquinas' partially successful effort to fuse the Aristotelian scheme with the Stoic notion had one fruitful result: it called attention to a mixed kind of knowledge which is simultaneously and genuinely both theoretical (or liberal) and constructive (or art).

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Meta.*, II, 2 (995 a 12-14); IV, 8 (1142 a 11-19).

²⁰ *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3; *De Causis*, lect. 1; *VI Ethic.*, lect. 7 (nn. 1209-1211).

IV. THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY: A REVISION OF THE QUADRIVIUM

Neither the Stoic enumeration of the liberal arts, nor the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of human knowledge, makes provision, even in principle, for history. Even if one tries to grasp Aquinas' grafting of the notion of the liberal arts onto the Aristotelian scheme of knowledge, it is still extremely puzzling how history fits into this scheme. Now it would be mere arrogance for a philosopher to determine the nature of history and its place in the scheme of human knowledge. What follows is no such determination; it is merely an hypothesis of the sort that would enable the philosopher at least to understand where history might fit in.

A. *Various views about history.*

1. It might be said that history is a sub-division of one of the fine arts, namely, literature. For the historian is telling a tale and he must plot that tale very much as any other story-teller does. He must delineate his characters, sketch in his background, play his theme.

Such a view of history, plausible enough when history was in its infancy, as in Herodotus and Thucydides, does not bear criticism. It overlooks the simple distinction between fact and fiction, between truth and plausibility, between objectivity with responsibility and subjectivity with delight, between scholarly reconstruction and imaginative construction.

2. It is often said that history is, like sociology, politics, law, psychology and economics, a social science. Now if social science meant merely a study of man in society, this view would be reasonable enough. For history does study how men acted in society in the past.

But social science is, like ethics, practical knowledge. The social sciences seek always the establishment of a more humane society; they have to them a hortatory character, an urgency, totally foreign to the super-human dispassion of the historian.

This character of practical knowledge is not obliterated in the social sciences when a merely descriptive and even statistical method is used to, unconsciously, whitewash it. Where is the Kinsey who, when he has completed his statistical analyses, does not go on to urge that the laws be changed to fit the social fact? The positivistic, descriptive, statistical social scientist is as eager to change society as is any other practical thinker: he wants to change it totally into what his studies reveal as the significant trends within it.

The social sciences begin with a study of what is and go on to what ought to be; that is why they are practical, not theoretical, knowledge. But the historian desires to change nothing. He begins with what was and goes on to what is. For the joy of understanding, he seeks the causes of the social facts he finds: that is why history is theoretical, not practical, knowledge. Because social science is practical, and history is theoretical, is knowledge sought for its own sake, history is not a social science.

3. A third possibility is that history is not a field of knowledge at all, but simply a method for studying any field of knowledge. So the history of mathematics is simply a method of studying mathematics, the history of philosophy is simply a method of studying philosophy. There is no history, there is only history-of.

This view overlooks the fact that the word "history" is ambiguous. It is quite true to say that history is history-of; that history is a method of studying anything. But then we hit the fact that there is also a history of history: so that history has some content. That is, the word history may legitimately being used to mean the study of how men acted in society in the past. In that case it has, in one meaning, a content, a proper subject matter, so that it is not merely a method for studying other disciplines.

4. Finally, history might be said to be propaedeutic to physics, or at least to that portion of physics which is the philosophy of man. It might be held, by some very Aristo-

telian fellow, that if history is the study of how men acted in society in the past, then its function is to supply the philosopher with data from which to draw conclusions about the nature of man.

This suggestion is as unpromising as its predecessors. In the first place history is studied simply for its own sake, as an intelligible body of knowledge, and not merely as an instrument for collecting data for philosophy. In the second place the philosophy of human nature has no need for the kind of data gathered by history. The data needed by the philosopher of human nature are available from common observation, and not at all dependent on history.

B. *History is a liberal art.*

That history is liberal knowledge of some kind seems clear enough. Liberal knowledge means theoretical knowledge, as opposed to practical and productive knowledge. Theoretical knowledge, in turn, means purely intellectual knowledge, knowledge sought for its own sake. Clearly history is of this kind. The propagandist of one kind or another may use the data of history for a practical purpose, to change society in a given way. But this does not affect the detached status of history itself as an investigation pursued for its own sake into how men acted in society in the past.

But I suggest, further, that history is liberal arts knowledge. The distinguishing feature of the liberal arts, we have agreed, is that they are constructive—theoretical; that in them there is making for the sake of knowing; that in them what is known is precisely a mental construct. Now what we know in history is *not* how men acted in society in the past, but, rather *our reconstruction* of how men acted in society in the past. The reason for that assertion is this: the data are too scattered, too fragmentary to enable us to know the full story even of a single event, much less of recorded history in general. Now when, regarding a given event, datum A and datum B are both significant, but only datum A is available, then the meaning of

datum A is altered necessarily by the absence of modifying datum B. Where the evidence is only partial, the significance of the part we have is altered by our intelligizing of it in isolation from the absent data. What we know in history is our own intellectual structuring of data about how men acted in the past.

Not only the selective and fragmentary condition of the data require structuring, so does its complexity. There are so many facts, so many partial and apparently unrelated informations about any given event, that to make sense of the data at all it is necessary to establish relations, structures, between its parts.

For both of these reasons—the fragmentary and the complex character of the data—it remains that what we know in history is our structuring, our own reconstruction, of the data about how men acted in society in the past. Liberal knowledge as in physics and metaphysics leads to a knowledge of things in themselves. Liberal arts knowledge is a knowledge of our own mental constructions. History clearly pertains to the latter rather than to the former, and is therefore a liberal art.

C. *History, the humanities, and the quadrivium.*

It has been established earlier in this article that two members of the *quadrivium* (astronomy and the physics of sound) are not liberal arts at all. They are sciences, theoretical or liberal knowledge but not liberal arts, except in a purely secondary and incidental manner. It has also been established that the two other members (arithmetic and geometry) are primarily liberal knowledge, and only secondarily liberal arts knowledge. Let us say, with simplicity and without inaccuracy, that none of the four disciplines commonly listed as constituting the *quadrivium* is, in any significant sense, a liberal art. On the other hand history, which has never been included in the list of the seven liberal arts, is a liberal art. These two facts taken together are suggestive, and what they suggest is that the *quadrivium* properly understood is constituted by the humanities, grouped around history as the leading art, just as in the

trivium grammar and rhetoric are grouped around logic as the leading art.

By this term "humanities" I mean the integrated study of a culture, whether that culture be the classical Graeco-Roman, the medieval Christian, the Renaissance, or the contemporary secular culture, or any other. The complexity of such a study is achieved through the simultaneous examination of that culture's history, philosophy, literature and art. The unity of such a study is achieved largely through the dominance of history in the culture-study. What I suggest, then, is that the *quadrivium* should mean the humanities; that the humanities should mean the integrated study of a given culture in its history, its philosophy, its literature and its art; that the integration of these humanistic studies comes about through clustering the last three around history as the dominant study in this area.

There are very serious drawbacks to such a proposal, and I have no inclination to minimize them. I intend to list those that have occurred to me and to acknowledge their gravity. But I think that this should be said at once: the embarrassments incident upon considering the humanities to constitute the *quadrivium* are not nearly so overwhelming as those incident upon considering that mathematics and science constitute the *quadrivium*.

1. The first difficulty is that history is the only one of the four humanistic studies which, if held to be a liberal art, would have a proper subject matter. Clearly philosophy, literature and art fall under other headings in the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme of knowledge.

This is, of course, true. One could never in any proper sense refer to literature, philosophy or art as liberal arts—they simply are not. Philosophy is clearly either theoretical knowledge (the philosophy of nature and metaphysics) or practical knowledge (ethics) but, with the exception of logic, certainly not liberal arts knowledge. Similarly architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature are fine arts, not liberal arts. If anyone

is engaged in any of these studies, he is not engaged in the liberal arts.

Yet the humanities can be viewed as a unit, as the study *not* of history, philosophy, literature and art, but *of a culture* in its history, philosophy, literature and art. So when I read philosophy humanistically my question is not: what is the truth?; my question is rather: what did the people of this culture believe to be the truth?—and that is quite a different question. The humanistic study of philosophy, literature and art is *not* a study of these things in themselves; it *is* a cultural, an historical, study of these subjects, and therefore participates to a significant degree in the liberal arts character of the key art, which is history. Because the study of a culture is the unified study of our reconstruction of that culture, pursued for its own sake, the humanities, now identified with the *quadrivium*, are, as a whole, liberal (sought for its own sake) arts (knowledge of our own intellectual construction) knowledge. Therefore the parts making up the humanities participate in liberal arts character of the whole. Hence it is not unreasonable to treat them, insofar as they constitute the humanities, as liberal arts, even though only one of them (history) is, considered in itself, a liberal art.

2. The second difficulty is this: the humanistic study of philosophy as one aspect of a culture is an outrageous misconception of philosophy. It is a confusion of philosophy with the history of philosophy, and of the question, what is the truth? with the question, what did a given people at a given time think to be true?

If philosophy were studied only humanistically and not at all systematically, then this difficulty would be insurmountable. But it would seem reasonable to expect that a college might offer both systematic philosophy and also humanistically orientated readings in philosophy—indeed, my own college has been doing this for six years. The systematic approach is only enriched and reinforced by the humanistic approach.

3. The third difficulty is this: for an obscure philosopher

seriously to suggest that Western intellectual history has wrongly conceived the *quadrivium* for two thousand years, and that he alone conceives the *quadrivium* correctly, is an instance of that arrogance not uncommon among obscure philosophers.

Very likely this difficulty expresses considerable truth. Still, reasons have been offered and the only way to get an idea out of an arrogant philosopher's head is to demolish his reasons. But in addition to the theoretical reasons already given, there is a practical consideration, to my mind of very great weight, which argues that the humanities are the *quadrivium*, and I develop that practical consideration in the next, and final, section.

V. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRACTICE

The two suggestions concerning the *quadrivium* made in this exposition were: 1) that we should acknowledge that mathematics and science are not liberal arts, even though they are liberal knowledge; and 2) we should recognize that history is a liberal art; and further that the humanities, understood as the integrated study of a civilization in its history, philosophy, literature and art, is a liberal art; and that the humanities, grouped around history, make a perfectly sensible content for the *quadrivium*.

I now suggest that educational practice at the college and university level has, for many years, acted on these two convictions without ever formulating them explicitly. So it is generally felt—and I use the word “felt” deliberately—in a college of arts and sciences that mathematics and science are science, and not art. That is to say, it is generally, though unconsciously, recognized by administrators that mathematics and science (the traditional *quadrivium*) are not liberal arts at all. “Feeling” anticipated intellectual analysis, as it often does.

So deep is this feeling, that one often hears clamors for more “liberal arts subjects” in the science curriculum. When the clamorers are pressed for what they mean by “liberal arts subjects” they usually reply “history and literature”; or, if

they are particularly enlightened, they will even say "history, literature and philosophy"; or they may even be more accurate and say "cultural studies," or "the humanities." It is simply a fact of educational usage that "liberal arts" means humanities. Not only is it more or less obscurely recognized that the traditional *quadrivium* is not liberal arts at all, but it is also obscurely recognized what the *quadrivium* really is, namely the humanities. I merely suggest that these feelings, these widespread obscure recognitions, are sound.

The validity of these feelings is, I think, attested by the discomfort of those who attempt to talk about the *quadrivium* at all. There is, of course, no earthly reason why two sciences (astronomy and the physics of sound) should be included, and all other sciences excluded, from an educational devise that is alleged to have validity for our day. So it is commonly said, "well, the exact number isn't important." This is uncandid. Every number is an exact number: an inexact number is a contradiction in terms. Does the *quadrivium* include all physical and biological and mathematical sciences? If not, why some and not others? If so, where is the distinction between art and science? Pushed in the right way the answer is always the same: the number of mathematical and physical sciences included in the *quadrivium* is zero: and *that* number does make a difference.

Other, equally uncandid, insist on including mathematics and physical science under liberal arts by the simple process of divesting the term "liberal arts" of all meaning. Liberal arts means merely "liberal knowledge," which obviously includes mathematics and science. So the *trivium* becomes "the logical arts," or "the language arts," or "the communication arts," or "the literary arts," or "humanistic studies"; and the *quadrivium* becomes "the mensuration arts," or "the art of quantity," or "scientific studies." There is here a contempt for meanings, and a contempt for thought and a contempt for reality. Art is art, not science. Liberal arts knowledge is liberal arts knowledge, not liberal knowledge. The *trivium* has nothing to do with literature or humanities; it is grammar,

rhetoric and logic. The *quadrivium*, if it deals with quantity and change, isn't art at all, but science; and if it is art, it is humanistic studies, not mathematical and scientific studies.

Actual education practice, then, suggests that it is proper to view the humanities as the correct content of the *quadrivium*. The abundant floundering of those who take any other view reinforce the conviction that here practice is sound and theory has lagged behind it.

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THE KANTIAN THEORY OF SENSE-INTUITION : A CRITIQUE



IT HAS been said that Immanuel Kant is "without doubt the most seminal influence in modern philosophy."¹ Sir Arthur Eddington confirms this view when he writes:

. . . if it were necessary to choose a leader from among the older philosophers, there can be no doubt that our choice would be Kant. We do not accept the Kantian label; but, as a matter of acknowledgment, it is right to say that Kant anticipated to a remarkable extent the ideas to which we are now being impelled by the modern developments of physics.²

If these observations are accurate, a study of the Kantian synthesis is not a purely academic exercise executed upon a museum piece. It stands rather as a challenging area of research to those who would understand better the more ultimate directives of our times.

In a necessarily brief study of this kind, an analysis of the entire Critical Philosophy would be an extremely ambitious, if not presumptuous, undertaking. It is preferable, therefore, to isolate what appears to be, at first glance, only a minor incident in the development of the Kantian system: the analysis of sensuous experience. However, this initial, almost introductory, moment of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is in reality a focal point whose significance can scarcely be exaggerated. Kant himself points out that the correctness of his "Copernican hypothesis," the validity of his *a priori* conclusions regarding the world of nature, and the truth of his subsequent metaphysical doctrines all depend upon the cogency of this examination of ordinary perception.³

¹ Leighton, Joseph, "Kant, the Seminal Thinker" in *Immanuel Kant* (Chicago, 1925), p. 78.

² Sir Arthur Eddington, *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (New York, 1939), Chap. XII, pp. 188-189.

³ Kant, *Selections* (Scribners, 1929. Edited by T. M. Green), p. xxxix.

SENSE-INTUITION ACCORDING TO KANT

Indicative of its commanding position with respect to what follows is the placement of the analysis of sense experience at the beginning of the first Critique. The *Transcendental Aesthetic* occupies only a few first pages, but the entire ulterior development of Kantian thought is conditioned by it. Here reality is limited to "the sum of all possible objects of experience."⁴ Of these objects only the phenomenal aspects are declared knowable.⁵ What is more, they are knowable only by way of a "pure intuition,"⁶ although they are dependent upon an empirical moment for their givenness.⁷ It is true that reason must postulate a noumenal ground for these phenomenal appearances, but it can know nothing of its nature.⁸ Moral and aesthetic judgments alone suffice to penetrate it, and it is the work of the second and third *Critiques* to illuminate their achievements in this realm as it was the task of the first *Critique* to assign limits to, and declare the impotency of, the speculative reason here.

Having synoptically noted the position of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* in the general context of the Critical Philosophy, we must observe at closer range the precise formulation of the specific theory under discussion: sensuous intuition. Which of several possible meanings does Kant attach to the term "intuition"? Does he, with Descartes, define intuition as a purely intellectual conception indifferent to the actual existence of an object and certified only by its distinctness and clarity?⁹ Obviously not, for Kant is careful to insist that, although all thought relates directly or indirectly to intuitions, these are possible for man only on the condition that they affect his sensibility.¹⁰ Is he, then, simply reaffirming

⁴ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York, 1900), p. 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁹ Descartes, *Oeuvres Choiesies* (Paris, n. d.), p. 306.

¹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 1.

the traditional teaching of the ancients and medievals that intuition, in its primary meaning, is an act of the external sense terminating immediately in a physically present existent? Even a cursory reading of the *Aesthetic* forbids such an interpretation. Kant uncompromisingly affirms that sensible intuition reaches only the appearances of a thing and not the thing-in-itself.

A careful reading of the text, however, reveals a further, more startling fact. Kantian intuition does not merely fail to reach the thing-in-itself. Considered precisely as empirical, it cannot even be said to reach the phenomenon. According to the analysis of Kant, sensuous intuition presents a two-fold aspect: Sensibility is the capacity of the knowing subject to receive the object; sensation is the actual impression caused by the object on the sensibility. To these two aspects correspond, respectively, pure and empirical intuition. On the side of the object of sensuous intuition there exists a complementary duality of formal and material elements. Sensation or empirical intuition is directed to the material element common to all phenomena. The phenomenon, therefore, is not simply and purely a sensible thing, nor is it the datum of sensation. Taken formally, the phenomenon is the object of pure intuition, for it must be subsumed under the *a priori* forms in order to be known. Its matter is known only *a posteriori*.¹¹ In consequence, it is really an object of reason, and there is no properly *sensible* knowledge involved.

What, then, is the purpose of this empirical moment in the Kantian theory of sense-intuition? That there is such a moment cannot be doubted, for its presence is insisted upon in unequivocal terms. Seemingly, however, it contributes nothing to the knowledge of the intuited object. It is Kant himself who enlightens us on the capital importance of this almost imperceptible point which he is pleased to call an empirical intuition or, what comes to the same thing, a sensation. Inasmuch as he thereby leaves to things as we obtain them by the senses

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

their actuality, he can in no way be accused of idealism.¹² Thought, precisely by means of its sensible contact with these appearances, is assured that it is not thinking in a void.

In face of these undeniably realist intentions, the reader of Kant may be temporarily confused by the persistence of the *a priori* forms of sensibility. Such confusion can be no more than momentary, for the author of the *Critique* constantly affirms the impotency of a merely empirical intuition to bring forth truly scientific judgments.¹³ If Kant is anxious that thought be about real things, he is equally anxious that it be really scientific. Hence, neither the empirical moment nor the pure intuition may be underplayed or eliminated if the Critical Philosophy is to restore to thought the actuality of its object and the objective validity of its judgments.

SOME CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

The foregoing attempt to place the *Transcendental Aesthetic* in context, to note certain key terms of its formulation, and to observe the more ultimate intentions of its author in proposing it, does not, of course, pretend to represent an adequate account of the Kantian doctrine. Its aim is simply to provide a frame of reference for the critical discussion promised at the beginning of this study. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the following analysis will not prove to be a philosophical reproduction of Don Quixote's battle with the windmills. To this end the preceding summary has been carefully sifted. It seems wholly verifiable by the text of the *Critique* itself, and the interpretation of the text is in conformity with that commonly accepted by disciples and scholars of Kant.

It is a truism that what an author does not say is often of far greater moment than anything he says. Let us examine first what has but recently been called the "most momentous dogmatic assumption of Kantian epistemology."¹⁴ It is the

¹² Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (New York, 1950), p. 40.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁴ Quoted in Josef Pieper's, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (New York, 1952), p. 32.

notion that knowledge—both experiential and intellectual—is exclusively activity. Consider experience in the Kantian sense. It is something more than an empirical contact with real things. It is, moreover, the “something more” or the “pure intuition” which is productive of genuine knowledge. The senses intuit nothing. There really is no such thing as sensible intuition in this analysis of experiential knowing. Only *after* it has been subsumed under the *a priori* forms is the matter of the phenomenon known, and these *a priori* forms are quite completely independent of the sensible object, prescribing rather than discovering its formal structure. An activity of organization executed upon a formless, chaotic matter, therefore, is the unique function of the *a priori* forms of pure intuition, and it is this which properly constitutes the knowledge of experience.

It is important to recall that the moment of receptivity so often insisted upon by Kant does not in any way contribute to the actual knowledge of the sensible object. In the preceding section it was noted that such an empirical moment is vitally necessary in order to place the Critical Philosophy beyond the reproach of idealism. But that is its sole function. It assures us that the object of our thought is actual; it adds nothing to our actual penetration of the object.

The ancients, as well as their medieval commentators, thought otherwise in this matter. They held that sense perception and intellectual knowledge included a moment of receptivity possessed of a genuine knowledge-value. This is not to say that they denied the discursive element so characteristic of human knowledge. They simply affirmed the presence of a superior, contemplative moment as the alpha and omega of ratiocination.¹⁵ In sensible knowledge this receptivity is the *sine qua non* through which is grasped, not only the existence of things, but even something of what these things are.

Which of these views is more in accord with conscious data? From the standpoint of internal experience, it would seem that

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Kantian *a priori*ism is a purely gratuitous assumption. As given, the object *is* spatio-temporal, and we are entirely unconscious of constructing a formless "given." On the contrary, our sensorial awareness of things is marked by passivity with respect to their existence and their constitution. When, for example, we wish to discover more about what a sensible object is, we investigate *it* and not ourselves. It is true that Kant himself remarks the difficulty of discovering experientially this constructive activity. In fact, he declares that it is discovered only after long practice and careful scrutiny.¹⁶ Perhaps a longer apprenticeship is necessary for this delicate task of separating the *a priori* addition from the original element given by sense. Thus far, however, the enterprise has met with little success.

Granted that conscious data does not indicate the presence of an *a priori* element in experiential knowledge, is it necessary to admit it on solely intelligible grounds? In other words, does the very meaning of cognition demand it? It would seem that the Kantian answer is in the affirmative. Scientific knowledge cannot arise from sensuous experience because this latter cannot claim universality. Objective, universal validity must, therefore, be bestowed upon it by the mind. Now, it seems reasonable to demand that scientific knowledge be universally valid, and it is true that sensible beings as contingent cannot produce judgments of such an objective and universally valid character. Nevertheless, it does not seem legitimate to conclude that universality must therefore be supplied by way of the human intellect constructing its object according to certain *a priori* forms. There is a way of saving scientific knowledge which does not involve making an autonomous lawgiver of the knowing subject. It is conceivable that contingent things possess intelligibility because they have been formed by a mind, though not by a human mind. It is further conceivable that the human mind is able to take possession of this intelligibility through its contact with things and its own intellectual power. This latter view, in fact, seems to accord better with the data available to

¹⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 1.

us, for the human intellect seeks and searches as if it were, indeed, a derived and dependent power and not an absolute and independent legislator.

A further characteristic of this pure activity which constitutes knowledge in the Kantian doctrine must also be noted. It is concerned with the *kind* of activity implied here. The key terms of the theory indicate the pattern according to which experiential knowledge is conceived. In a sense they are familiar terms, but it must be admitted that they are used in a way that would be quite unfamiliar to their Greek originator. Within the phenomenon, it will be remembered, matter and form are to be distinguished. To each of these there corresponds, respectively, an empirical and a pure intuition. Sensible experience is neither the one nor the other taken separately, but a composite of both. Kant explicitly states that experience is a *compound* of empirical and a *priori* elements.¹⁷ We have, then, a quasi-adaptation of the hylomorphic theory. Experiential knowledge is composed of two constitutive principles: sensation which is its matter and pure intuition which organizes it according to a *priori* forms. In short, knowledge here appears as a *tertium quid*.

Aristotle and his medieval commentators would have been somewhat amazed at this importation of hylomorphic terms into the area of epistemology. In their analysis of the act of knowing, a matter-form union is precisely what the union between the knower and the known object is not. That which is had here is a more perfect union than that of matter and form, for the matter does not become the form, whereas the knower does become the known object in such a way that there does not arise out of this a third thing.

Precisely what is the way by which this identity between the intellect and its object is achieved? That such an identity is effected in every act of cognition seems incontestable to these thinkers. How else can the expansiveness proper to knowledge be understood? If the knower and the thing known were united

¹⁷ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 1.

in the manner of a composite, the knowing subject could not remain himself while becoming another being. The very nature of a composite union would require the knower to lose his form in the process of acquiring another. Since, then, the subjective possession of the form characteristic of material beings is inadmissible here, this possession must be objective or "intentional." The object remains physically distinct but becomes one with the knowing agent in an identity of intention. Thus, the philosophers in the classical tradition infer to a mode of existence other than the entitative—driven, as it were, by an intelligible necessity inhering in the very notion of knowledge.

Because the senses are sources of genuine knowledge, they possess their objects according to this non-material, non-entitative mode. Aristotle and his medieval heirs are careful to insist that the sense receives the sensible object without its matter, that is, non-subjectively. In other words, there is no matter-form composite: the sense in act is *one* with its object. It is true, of course, that the sense power operates in and through an organ. Such an organ may be affected in the manner proper to composites, but such an affection is incidental to the act of sensing which is, properly speaking, an intentional or objective possession of the sensible object.

At this point we may note a striking antithesis of terminologies. According to Kant, the senses are directed toward and, in a way, receive only the *matter* of the phenomenon. In the analysis of Aristotle, it is expressly stated that the sense receives the *form* without the matter.¹⁸ Obviously, there is here a more than merely verbal opposition. We are confronted by two radically differing conceptions of knowledge. In the Aristotelian tradition, knowledge is understood as a grasping of being as it objectively is through a spiritual possession of it or an intentional participation in it. For Kant, however, knowledge is a process of constructing its object; it is a matter of prescribing the laws of being instead of discovering them. The "Copernican" hypothesis is, indeed, a revolution.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *De Anima*, Bk. II, Ch. XII, 424^a16.

Do not each of these views rest upon postulates which are, in either case, quite arbitrary? Both the Kantian *a priori* forms of sensibility and the Aristotelian distinction between entitative and intentional modes of being appear, at first glance, as equally unprovable. Closer inspection, however, reveals a profound difference here. In the words of a contemporary critic, it was really Kant "who introduced the dangerous notion of the postulate." When Aristotle remarked the necessity of a non-entitative mode of being in order to account for the peculiar activity called knowledge, he was not postulating. He was *inferring* from certain real data to what is an inescapable necessity if by "knowledge" we really mean "to know." When we reflect upon the intimate nature of cognition, it presents itself as a possession of, or participation in, known objects by a knowing subject. Such possession or participation cannot be achieved by way of a composite union because the subjective mode of having or being is restricted rigorously to one. Hence, we must recognize here a mode of having or being which is "intentional" or objective.

The Kantian postulate, however, does not claim to be accessible in this way. Here the reasoning proceeds somewhat like this: mathematics and the natural sciences exist. They contain universal and objectively valid judgments. These universal and objectively valid judgments cannot proceed from what is merely contingent. Therefore, these judgments cannot arise from experience which is concerned with the contingent, but must have a source altogether other than it. This source must be the human mind, which, in producing its object according to *a priori* forms, bestows upon it objectivity and universality. It seems superfluous to point out certain "leaps" in arriving at this conclusion. That universality does not reside in the contingent as such may be granted without inferring to the necessity of a ground other than the natural order of existing things. Again, if it is conceded that a source other than sensible existents must be found for scientific knowledge, it does not immediately or necessarily follow that this source is the human mind's constructive activity.

In the course of these reflections certain basic assumptions and postulates of the Kantian theory have been questioned. In the light of the only data available to us, they seem to have been found wanting. Conscious experience does not testify to the constructive activity of *a priori* forms. In fact, when we attentively scrutinize our internal awareness, it rather positively argues a certain receptivity and dependence with respect to sensible objects, not only as *occasions* of intellectual activity but as really contributory to our knowledge. Similarly, the Kantian reversal of the meaning of knowledge appears to be unwarranted. Perhaps it is significant that Kant himself does not always adhere to his own theory. If he were consistent, he would present his *Critique* simply as a construction of knowledge. What he clearly says is that he has discovered the real, authentic nature of knowledge. In short, he presupposes and denies in the same breath.¹⁹ It appears, then, that the traditional notion of cognition is not easily abandoned, and the inversion of man's natural ordination to being is difficult to achieve.

Nevertheless, these reflections have not proceeded from a negative attitude of mind. They have aimed rather to stimulate discussion and research in that spirit of honest inquiry so highly prized by Kant himself. Certainly it is not claimed here that Aristotle or Aquinas or anyone else, for that matter, has said the last word concerning the nature and manner of human knowing. Neither is it intended that a so profoundly philosophical work as the *Critique* should be lightly dismissed. It is simply suggested that it be re-examined in the light of the data available to us, that its assumptions and postulates be once more scrutinized. Only in this way does genuine philosophical speculation progress.

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¹⁹ Von Hildebrand, *New Tower of Babel* (New York, 1953), p. 73.

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BOOK REVIEWS

An Existentialist Theology. By JOHN MACQUARRIE. New York: Macmillan, 1955. Pp. 252 with index. \$3.75.

Journey Through Dread. By ARLAND USSHER. New York: Devin-Adair, 1955. Pp. 160 with index. \$3.75.

Macquarrie's unusually lucid exposition of an obscure subject begins by posing as its basic problem that of the relationship of philosophy to theology. The author states that throughout history such a problem has repeatedly forced itself upon Christian theology when, in endeavoring to defend itself, it has come, for good or for evil, under the influence of secular thought. At such times, he shows, it has derived much benefit from the contact through deeper insight into itself but also much harm by being absorbed into the lower science such as occurred in the nineteenth century when Hegelian dialectics and liberal modernism simply swallowed up the Christian belief. The fear that this might happen again, the author affirms, hovers over the thought of those contemporary theologians who reject all such contact and totally expurgate philosophic content from theology.

Thus Barth, for example, having been impressed with this danger through the sad experience of the last century, completely opposes a meeting of the two. He rejects any use of philosophy in the realm of faith as serving only to distort and obscure, not to clarify. In this attitude he would appear to offer a most serious objection to Bultmann's theology, which the author proposes to evaluate, but he does not think this to be so and for a deeper reason than the simple conviction that Bultmann may be trusted carefully to control the secular importation.

To expose this more profound reason the author points out that, besides its apologetical use, there is another deeper function of philosophy relative to theology which is that of clarifying its ontological suppositions. In this distinct service philosophy provides, or at least helps to provide, an insight into the being of the subject of theology, thereby taking an intrinsic relation to it and avoiding the pitfalls of the extrinsic apologetical relation. The author contends that this insight, presupposed to theological inquiry, is most perfectly provided for by existentialism which alone renders a true ontological picture of the theological subject. Therein, he holds, its use in the theology of Bultmann finds its sufficient justification.

The author supports his contention by showing that the proper notion of the subject necessary for theological inquiry is basically ontological, giving its true significance as being. He posits that only existentialism can

discover this significance and from this position concludes that it must be the "right" philosophy for use in such a pre-theological endeavor.

Of course, this is a most difficult position to criticize adequately within the limits of a review, since it involves the vast and fundamental problem of the nature of the subject in the affirmations of faith as well as in the derived propositions of theology. Leaving aside such a basic question, then, as practically unmanageable, let us restrict our criticism to the relatively simpler one as to whether or not existentialism provides what the author claims that it must and does as a prelude to theology, that is to say, a true ontological statement of the nature of man. From the dramatically clear though mute testimony of Heidegger's incomplete "*Sein und Zeit*," whose doctrine forms the basis of Bultmann's position, it seems obvious that it does no such thing. For although Heidegger intended in that work to provide a general description of beingness as such, taking his point of departure in a phenomenological analysis of the concrete situation of man, he was never able to go beyond the initial step, as the unfinished state of the work testifies, and therefore never able to arise to that general description of beingness itself which he conceived to be necessary to a true ontological understanding even of man. Starting from subjectivity, from which he excluded all universality and all categories, he was unable, as was only to be expected, to rise to a universal position. Whatever else he might have done, then, he has not supplied the required ontological insight for theology, and by that fact his ontological method condemns itself as futile for such a purpose. Judged solely by this norm, Bultmann's endeavor to erect a theology upon it could not meet with success.

When we investigate the justification the author gives for the eminence of Heidegger's method over traditional methods the same difficulty again comes to the fore. For in this respect he praises Heidegger for beginning the study of being as such from the point where it must start—from insight into that beingness which is "open" to us, that is to say, the subjectivity of man himself. This contention is at least debatable and it is rejected by a large body of traditional thought, in particular by Thomism. For Thomism subjectivity is truly most "open" to the subsistent intellect—the angel—which immediately apprehends its own essence by conversion to it and only subsequently goes out to other things; but it is not primarily open to the human mind which arises to knowledge of itself only through conversion to a phantasm, that is to say, secondarily and supposing previous contact with the openness of an external world. Thus for Thomism self-consciousness is the primary act in a subsistent intelligence but the secondary act in the rational intelligence of man. Of course one might well object to this Thomistic definition and attribute to man an angelic mode of knowing, but the consequences of such a position so conflict with experience that it becomes impossible to maintain it, as is made clear by

the continual necessity which it imposes of adding correctives to make this notion agree with our reflex consciousness of our thought life.

It is amusing to see in existentialist discussions based upon this notion how the proponents, having been led through their stress upon subjectivity as opposed to objectivity to conceive of man in the manner of the pure intellectual being—the angel in Thomism—, must then torment themselves to find an explanation for properties of rational thought which only follow from possession of a body, as is striking in their efforts to explain how objectivity enters into the subjective mode of thinking. This Heidegger, in particular, tries to do, in a somewhat Fichtean way, by elaborating a theory of the objective world as an instrument of the subjective *ego* in its activity, and by attributing to this *ego* properties which do not belong to it as such, as when he affirms that to think is to think an objective world and thereby supposes that he has explained objectivity by making it essential to thought as such (which it clearly is not, since God might well have remained solely turned into His own essence and have never thought an objective world). This Heideggerian sleight of hand is repeated in his endeavor to start from pure subjectivity, excluding all categories—especially that of substance—and then arise to a universal notion of being, wherein the trick lies in removing the reality of body from the definition of man at the beginning of the process and then verbally restoring it at the term. A Thomist is not surprised that these manipulations should have deceived only their author, and now apparently not even him.

There is still another objection against all such existentialist definitions of man as that upon which Bultmann rests his doctrine. It is this that they all reflect upon man in his fallen situation, perverted from the natural through original sin, and thus that they all see a distorted picture and interpret it in terms of distorted categories. They see not the pure intention of nature, according to which man is ordained to happiness, but its perversion, according to which man is doomed to frustration unless he be aided by grace, and thereby they misinterpret his ontological significance, conceiving it as an order to frustration through anxiety and despair. In this misinterpretation lies their great danger and the most serious objection against them such that they are rendered unsuitable for use in theology unless they be corrected by sound insights. Bultmann's doctrine does not escape this criticism.

Because of such objections the bulk of this treatise, which exposes the contents of Bultmann's ontological picture of man and its theological consequences, is not acceptable to Catholic theology without serious qualifications. Moreover it labors under another constant defect of at least tending to confuse an existentialist theodicy with a genuine theology insofar as it cites existentialist insights time and time again to provide explanations for the supernatural doctrines of the sacred text which are inacces-

sible in principle to the light of natural reason. An interesting example of this is its presentation of the doctrine of Bultmann on the "spiritual body" in St. Paul.

According to the author, Bultmann considers his interpretation of the Pauline notion of body so crucial that he makes much of his subsequent exegesis depend upon it. Now in this interpretation he distinguishes sharply between a traditional Western approach, based upon Greek metaphysical notions, and that of the existentialists, based upon intuition into the openness of human subjectivity. He gives the palm to the latter because it seems to eliminate some knotty problems in the text caused by the former mode of understanding, and therefore to be closer than it to the Pauline spirit. The Greek metaphysical approach, which he so censures, holds that the body and the spirit are both substances. Now this notion, he maintains, makes it difficult to understand what St. Paul could have meant by a "spiritual body" for such a concept must apply to some substance intermediate between body and spirit, an embarrassingly animistic doctrine which has the added inconvenience of rendering the Pauline notion of continuity of personality beyond the grave more than a little obscure. Both of these difficulties disappear, the author holds, before the existentialist conception of body.

The existentialist conception of the body is not of a substance but of a mode of being or a way of being, specifically, of man's way of being "in the world." The spiritual body, then, is simply the Christian's way of being in the world to come. Thus understood it is easy to see why St. Paul can speak of the Christian as being estranged from himself in his natural body but achieving unity of personality in the spiritual. In such a change no ontological mutation takes place but only one of way of being with the result that personality is preserved, and thus is eliminated an otherwise unintelligible block to the understanding of the "spiritual body."

Of course, not every difficulty is removed by this interpretation for it causes its own peculiar problems in other passages, as the author himself indicates, such as in those passages which refer to the estrangement of the body in ecstasy. We may go much further and state that beyond such obvious textual difficulties, which result from this position, there is the much more important theoretical one coming from the implied definition of man as a subsistent intellectual being. This makes the interpretation of "bodiness" as a way of being, a mode of existence, impossible to be rendered coherent. For in so defining man by the implications of attributing to him immediate conjunction to his own subjectivity, the existentialists make bodiness of necessity a modality of intentional existence which is to say substantially the same as the spiritual.

Yet it is this questionable conception which Bultmann, following his

existentialist master, uses to explain the substantially supernatural fact of the Christian life of grace. He does this by first distinguishing two ways of acting respecting bodily existence, one of which involves total absorption in it with attendant flight from self-possession. This he calls inauthentic existence. The other way of acting respecting bodily existence is such as to bring the subject into the possession of himself, to turn him to his own subjectivity. This he calls authentic existence. He conceives of man's factual condition, within this framework, as one of inauthentic existence, preoccupation with the "world," and with sin from which he can be restored to authentic existence in the repossession of himself only through grace which the redemption has made possible. Either this explains nothing or too much, and certainly the weight of probability lies upon the first position for the Christian life being as such supernatural lies far beyond the reach of natural insights let alone those of the existentialists. From their natural principles they cannot hope to penetrate its nature, nor the nature of sin nor the factual significance of human existence.

In spite of such censures, this treatise is well worth reading and studying for it presents the major ideas of an important contemporary theological current in such clear and logical fashion as to render its understanding and criticism from within Thomism satisfyingly accessible.

The new work on the existentialism of dread by Arland Ussher tends to be weak from the point of view of logical division and analysis and strong from that of felicitous aesthetic associations. It presents, therefore, as is characteristic of this type of literature, a wealth of ideas and intuitive conceptualizations of the subject together with a paucity of analysis, so as to stimulate continually but to place a heavy burden of personal labor upon the reader if he wishes to follow out its numerous suggestions. For those who can restrain their intellectual inquisitiveness and content themselves with wandering passively with the author, there is much pleasure to be derived from the trip, which term may be used without depreciation for the author sums up his work as a "Dantesque journey *à rebours* through the heavens of Kierkegaard, Heidegger's purgatorial experience of the tomb, and finally the sad inferno of Sartre." (p. 147)

Having so placed Kierkegaard in his heaven, it is not unreasonable that the author should characterize him as a mystic, although one who knew of mysticism only its solitude and dread. He paints a psychological picture of the Dane as an unhappy man of a singularly complicated turn of mind. On the highly personal canvas so prepared for his brush he then depicts the contribution of Kierkegaard to philosophy showing that in this realm, although Kierkegaard himself thought that he was rebelling against the rationalism of Hegel, he was really only bringing out the implications of the latter's Negation, somewhat in the vein of the Alexandrian's of the *via negativa*, as became patent in the language of his follower—"the

thinness and bleakness of Heidegger's language." (p. 59) In this development he fashioned the notion of the subjectivity and the freedom of man, contributing to Western thought the bringing back to it of "not so much Jerusalem as Greece—the Greece of Aeschylus." (p. 58)

Of Heidegger Ussher has to say that he first proposed the construction of an existentialist system, which was a contradictory aim since the systematic belongs to that to which existentialism reacts—to the contrary thesis, so much so that the notion of an existentialist doctrine or doctrinal body of thought has always seemed labored. One can understand, for this reason, why, when he came to formulate it, he had to turn first to phenomenological analysis.

That such a step had to be taken is obvious, although Ussher stresses more the fact of its being taken than the reason why. The latter was due to the inner nature of Kierkegaard's thought and his mode of conceptualization. He had reacted against Hegel's system as such, finding in his revolt the subjective justification for asserting that something other than that remarkable monument was the genuine ontological truth and that the spirit demanded quite a contrary food. Thus he was led to posit a contrary doctrine to satisfy this opposed demand both of the intellect to know and of the will to love, which doctrine by its inner opposition to the Hegelian dialectic of reason took on the properties of the irrational and the infinite. Now this notion itself contained a contradiction which had to be removed for the progress of the thought. For if, as it asserted, the rational is to be rejected insofar as it pretends to teach an ultimate truth then what sense is there is speaking of knowledge of the irrational and appetite for the infinite? These concepts arise in the rational sphere and would seem to be out of place in that sphere which opposes it. In order, therefore, that the essential validity of Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel might be maintained, this contradiction had to be purged, and Heidegger thought that this could be done through the use of Husserl's new analytical doctrine of phenomenology.

This new doctrine was thus the next logical step in the promotion of the existentialist gospel, not by way of an addition to the contents of the doctrine itself, but by way of preliminary purgation of their defects. Ussher shows how Heidegger, resting his thought upon it, and particularly upon Husserl's notion of intentionality, which he read in terms of the Kierkegaardian Will, endeavored to carry the program forward. Where Husserl stressed the projectivity of the intentional, he added the notion of the root of the projection in Dread. In doing that, as Ussher interestingly remarks, he tended to strike at the poetic heart of the German language by atomizing it in hyphenated particles—much to the amusement of the Logical Positivists—only to discover in his final attachment to Hölderlein that "philosophy divorced from poetry must wither." This remark is eloquent of Ussher's own mode of approach.

With his remarks on Sartre Ussher completes this triad. He esteems the French philosopher as "perhaps the greatest intellectual force today" and his most interesting characterizations of Sartre are those of "Manichean" and "Jansenist." He thinks that the key word in Sartre is not despair, as it is in Kierkegaard, nor dread, as for Heidegger, but "disgust," a disgust from a deep sense of the opposition of other to the self and of the frustrating evil of things. Nevertheless he does not think that Sartre is, in the last analysis, an evil mind, but an exhilarating and courageous one "which just misses being a great one." (p. 95)

Ussher suggests, if nothing else, that this existentialist trinity, whether it offers a solution to life or not, concentrates into itself all of the triumphs and failures, hopes and despair of contemporary history.

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An Essay on Christian Philosophy. By JACQUES MARITAIN. New York: Philosophical Library, 1955. Pp. 116 with index. \$2.75.

It might be argued that the English translation of Maritain's *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, available only now, more than twenty years after the French original, is superfluous and redundant. For if one has read Maritain's intervening works, and, above all, if one has tried to follow in his vocation as a Christian philosopher, then—to be epigrammatic—either one has failed in one's endeavors, in which case the *Essay* will strike no new light, or one has succeeded, in which case the light will not strike as new. But, as is more likely, none of us has failed so utterly or succeeded so singularly that he may not benefit from having the principle of solution to the problem of Christian philosophy spelled out and underlined.

That principle, according to the *Essay*, is "the classical distinction between the *order of specification* and the *order of exercise*, or again . . . between 'nature' and 'state.'" (p. 11) The *nature* of philosophy is, of course, "a pure, abstract essence" and one would be wrong "to endow such an abstraction with reality, to clothe it as such with a concrete existence." (p. 16) But, for all that, philosophy *does* have a nature, and "since the specification of philosophy hinges entirely on its formal object, and since this object is wholly of the rational order, philosophy considered in itself—whether in a pagan or Christian mind—depends on the same strictly natural or rational intrinsic criteria. So that the designation *Christian* which we apply to a philosophy does not refer to that which constitutes

it in its *philosophic essence*: simply as philosophy, *reduplicative ut sic*, it is independent of the Christian faith as to its object, its principles, and its methods." (p. 15)

On the other hand, Maritain stresses, "as soon as it no longer is a question of philosophy considered in itself but of the manner in which men philosophize, and of the divers philosophies which the concrete course of history has brought into existence, the consideration of the *essence* of philosophy no longer suffices; that of its *state* must be undertaken." (p. 17) And it is the Christian state that makes Christian philosophy Christian: "the expression Christian philosophy does not designate a simple essence but a complex, that is, an essence taken in a particular state." (p. 29) The bulk of the *Essay* is devoted precisely to the definition of such a state and its two chief components, "objective contributions" and "subjective aids," and to elucidations concerning the relations between theology and philosophy, and the special problems of apologetics and moral philosophy.

It would be sheer effrontery for all but very few among our generation of Christian philosophers to commend this or any other work of Maritain. As for the translation, most readers will be satisfied that, according to the translator's foreword, Maritain himself has read and corrected the English version, although the purist may object to some turns of phrases and to a Gallicism such as "[mathematical] ensembles" (p. 12), where *aggregates* would seem to be indicated. Critical comments, therefore, may be restricted to the historical significance of the *Essay*; and here one may be more expansive.

The *Essay* comes to us at a time when it could hardly be more topical. It is true that the problem of the nature of Christian philosophy has always been and always will be with us, but there are times when it takes on new guises and when the debate flows with renewed vigor. The present is one of those times. The problem is discussed for its own sake or, if not, it underlies many other controversies of the moment: the problem of Christian education, to mention but one. But the dangers which assailed a true notion of Christian philosophy in France twenty-five years ago and those which may assail it in North America today are not quite identical. For example, it seems fairly clear that Modernism was to some extent in Maritain's mind when he wrote the *Essay*, perhaps only a little less than that rationalism for which the notions *Christian* and *philosophy* are mutually exclusive, (and which should not be confused with Christian rationalism, which is only its father). But for us, here and now, the lines may be drawn differently. Modernism is dead or, at least, no longer vocal. And although the philosopher outside the Christian tradition may still suspect the intellectual honesty of him who draws from pre-Cartesian sources, we have acquired sufficient self-confidence to make it unnecessary to expend much of our effort proving our right to exist. And so, the current

debate on Christian philosophy is largely, and in the main, intramural and within orthodoxy. The question is no longer—if one is allowed another epigram—whether philosophy can be Christian, but whether Christian thought can be philosophical.

If that is true, then Maritain's *Essay* could conceivably be the object of a monumental equivocation, and therefore it might accidentally obscure the debate. It may be permissible, then, to make two suggestions—perhaps elementary, perhaps unacceptable—for the prospective reader's consideration. First: Maritain's *Essay* does not dwell on the *nature* of philosophy. That is for his own reasons, of course: the *Essay* deals with the Christian *state* of philosophy, and a scant three pages do hardly more than remind us that philosophy has a nature. But Maritain does assume agreement on what that nature is; and that assumption may have been fair considering his purposes, but it can hardly be—in one man's opinion—safely taken for granted in the present debate. Second: some questions which in the *Essay* are dealt with after the manner of *obiter dicta* have come to acquire greater relevance, perhaps even crucial importance. Very particularly, "further remarks" on the relations between theology and philosophy, which occupy little over four pages of the *Essay*, are hardly sufficient to constitute a doctrine capable of no equivocal interpretation which would, for example, answer the questions raised by Gilson's "Thomas Aquinas and our Colleagues" (Princeton University Press, 1953). The doctrine is there, of course, but it is so distilled and basic and simply put that it may elude a rapid glance. Consider, if not, this short, buried text, repeated or amplified or emphasized nowhere else in the *Essay*: "Once the distinction between the respective natures of philosophy and theology is acknowledged, there is nothing to forbid thought, now equipped in both disciplines, to pass in a single, concrete movement from one to the other. What theory sunders is at one in life." (p. 38) To overlook or to forget this and other passages which are not to the fore of the *Essay* may well result in agreement with Maritain which would be little more than purely verbal.

Maritain is more often heard and admired than listened to and faced up. The *Essay*, only an *opusculum*, is not likely to set the philosophical world on fire (although that might not be entirely the loss of the *Essay*). But it may, at any rate, be counted upon to give much light by which they can see who have what with.

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The Artist as Creator. By MILTON C. NAHM. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956. Pp. 352 with index. \$5.50.

The central problem of this book is, in the words of the author, an attempt to establish a "theory of fine art adequate to account for the emergence of the novel and unique yet intelligible work of fine art." (p. 82) Prof. Nahm seeks to resolve this problem by reconciling two apparently opposed and long-established positions about the fine artist: a) the artist is a maker who exercises a limited freedom of choice, and b) the artist is a creator endowed with unconditioned freedom of originality. It is not surprising, therefore, that the sub-title of the book is "an essay of human freedom." The author appears to regard fine art primarily as a manifestation of human freedom.

The work is divided into two main parts. The first part, Book I, is largely a historical summary of the "great analogy" of the fine artist to God as creator and maker. It is the view of Prof. Nahm that the "great analogy" has dominated speculation in the Western tradition, out of which has come the notion of the fine artist as one endowed with a type of freedom that is analogous to God's as a creator. The author remarks that "the analogy turns in general terms upon the relation of the artist and of God to ends and to matter, in explanation of the individual product of the creative process." (p. 64) Mr. Nahm presents this analogy as "a problem" at three levels of conflict.

The aesthetic conflict contrasts Croce with Bosanquet. Croce's position is that "expression is free inspiration" and hence the artist is a free creator. Bosanquet's position is that the imagination is "the mind working under great reservations which set it free," and hence the artist is a free maker. Croce, consequently, proposes a theory of artistic creativity which gives a logical priority to intuition and at the same time attributes an unconditioned freedom to the artist while denying any freedom manifested in the technique of art. Freedom of choice is thus eliminated for the artist because the artist is not related to ends. Bosanquet sees this procedure as destroying the relation of the mind of the artist to the external world. The conflict between the two is not so interesting as the underlying agreement. Both appear to belong to the tradition that, in general, denies attributing the miraculous powers of God to man; yet the analogous character of speaking of man's creative powers in art is quickly forgotten. The presumption remains that the human artist has an omnipotence and omniscience attributed properly to God and that the human artist is, after all, capable of transcending the natural order of things in the miraculous way in which God can.

The cosmological conflict contrasts the issue of making and creating in the "historical conflict of cosmologies" one finds in Plato's *Timaeus* as opposed to the account of the creation of the world in Genesis. Mr. Nahm

subscribes to the view that the theory in the *Timaeus* is a theory of making and not of creation, and hence Plato's God is an architect who shaped the world out of a given, eternal matter. The account in Genesis, of course, speaks of the world as created by God out of nothing. The relevance of briefly introducing these two accounts of the formation of the universe (expanded and developed by later writers) is to suggest that just as creation in the strict sense by God came to be the dominant explanation of the coming to be of the universe so, in a theory of fine art, the notion of artistic creation tended to supplant the notion of artistic making. The original analogy of the artist to God was supplanted by the view that the artist is really a creator.

The microcosmic conflict concerns divergent interpretations of freedom deriving from the cosmological conflict. The theory of cosmic making includes an interpretation of man as having a microcosmic soul that is analogous to the macrocosmic world soul. The theory of the creation of the world by God includes an understanding of man as created in God's image. It is easy to see how the notion of creation and the notion of unqualified freedom become joined on the one hand and, on the other, how making and conditioned freedom become joined. Once more the analogy of the artist to God is lost when, in subsequent development, unqualified freedom becomes attributed to the fine artist.

The main intent of Prof. Nahm must not be forgotten in presenting the "great analogy" of the artist to God in terms of these conflicts. His historical presentation of writers in the tradition of the "great analogy" is not for the sake of preserving the analogy, for he dispenses with it later. He wishes to use the aesthetic contributions made by writers in that tradition for establishing his own view of the artist as a creator (in a limited sense) of something that is at once unique, novel and intelligible. Instead, however, of giving an analytic presentation of his position, he continues to approach it historically since he believes that "aesthetic and theological problems of creativity" are so closely united that they must first be disengaged as they become distinct in writings throughout the Western tradition. Hence, prior to the emergence of a discipline for the analysis of art as a craft, speculation on the artist as a creator was drawn from the study of such abstractions as the ugly, the genius, the sublime, and the beautiful. The remainder of the first part of the book summarizes speculation on these topics.

The second part of the book, entitled "The Structure of Art and Fine Art" is devoted to arguing that the creativity of the artist can be satisfactorily explained on natural, i. e., non-theological grounds. Prof. Nahm presents two somewhat extreme and opposed positions from this point of view. One position makes the artist's imagination the basis for unqualified originality in artistic production. The other position tends to reduce the artistic order to the order of science by analyzing the work of art merely

as a sign, or as the product of craft, or as the expression of feeling. In either case, and regardless of merits peculiar to each position, both views fail insofar as they tend to reduce all judgments of aesthetic value to judgments of fact.

The final elaboration of Prof. Nahm's own view can be summarized in the following terms. From the "great analogy," we have learned that real creation is beyond the accomplishment of the human spirit. All the human artist can do is to give a new shape from his mind and imagination to the world which he has not created. Nevertheless, man can, through fine art, produce a work that is intelligible and original, interpreted to mean classifiable and individual. To produce what is new in this way, however limited by the material, is to specify what human freedom means in art. Creativity in art, therefore, combines both perfection and originality.

The book is a scholarly one, well written, with an abundant use of source materials. The author exhibits great ability in presenting in fine summary form the content of many important writers. In a sense, however, it is too much of a good thing, for the book is not balanced enough by an analytic contribution the author himself appears able to make. In the preface to the book, Mr. Nahm concedes that the book "pays preponderant attention to the idealist tradition in aesthetics and in philosophy of art." His justification is that the problem of the artist as creator could only have originated and developed in a tradition in which the world is assumed to have been created in time by God. "It is not, therefore, by chance that Plato and his followers assume a more important position in the analysis of the 'great analogy' than do Aristotle and the Aristotelians."

The sanity of Prof. Nahm's basic position, his sound realization that the theory of fine art should account for what is novel, unique and intelligible in a work of art without recourse to the excesses of so-called creative expression and an unlimited freedom of the human spirit, seem to me to be adversely affected by his primary reliance on the idealistic tradition in philosophy. Had he relied more on Aristotle and his followers, his basic position would be more articulate and stronger, for although the theorists of fine art have followed more the followers of Plato, the artists themselves have produced as Aristotelians. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the artists have produced precisely as they are artists and that Aristotle observed works of fine art precisely as produced, for he took his poetic doctrine from an inductive examination of the poetic order whereas the idealist philosophers approach fine art with *a priori* conceptions. In the last analysis, the success of a work in aesthetics depends primarily on the extent it analyzes art and the artists rather than on an analysis of the theorists of art. Prof. Nahm's preoccupation with the latter aspect prevents his book from achieving a definitive treatment of aesthetics that it otherwise would have attained.

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The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr. By HANS HOFMANN. New York: Scribner's, 1956. Pp. 269. \$3.95.

This volume was originally published in German, in Switzerland, though it is based on research done by the author at Princeton and Union Theological Seminaries. The author is justified in thinking that an English translation will be welcomed by readers who could avail themselves of the works of R. Niebuhr, for he does throw considerable light on the development of the American theologian's thought. His intention is "to demonstrate the inner unity of Niebuhr's thought" and he has succeeded, even though he has examined the major works of Niebuhr in their chronological order of publication. He has been able to do this, because, as he points out, "his (Niebuhr's) one great concern remains always the same; the changes are confined to his theological or philosophical views." (p. 7)

The author recalls a period in Niebuhr's life, which would be unknown to most of his readers, yet has had a preponderant influence on his thought, has, in fact, provided him with his "one great concern." Niebuhr started his life as a minister in charge of a small church in Detroit. The young minister had emerged from his theological training with "the picture of man as a religious individual whose interests were intellectual and spiritual and were not seriously affected by economic and social factors." (p. 8) He soon learned the inanity of such an image and it is to his credit that he decided to reform it. Several decades after Leo XIII, "he began to see, and saw ever more clearly, that preaching and pastoral care must be the expression of God's serious concern for man in his present situation, and of God's love for him." (p. 9)

This early experience and the young minister's reaction to it has guided all his work and explains his power. "The relation of gospel and world to each other is the main theme of Niebuhr's work. His starting-point is the conflict between them which results from the disturbance and rupture of their relation—from what the Bible calls sin. His concern is the proclamation of the re-establishment of the relation—of what in the Bible is called grace." (p. 14) In discussing Niebuhr's first book, *Does Civilization Need Religion?*, Hoffman makes a remark, which is a significant commentary on the theological training of the young minister: "Later we shall consider at what point and for what reasons Niebuhr revised this conception of religion, until, with his new understanding of revelation, the world religion, almost vanishes from his vocabulary." (p. 25) As is made clear later on, this "new understanding of revelation" is really his first understanding of revelation, that is, his first taking the Christian revelation seriously.

Another significant remark is made by Hoffman when he comes to analyze the two major works of Niebuhr. "Even here dogmatic structure in the strict sense is not attainable for two reasons. The inner and more

important is the fact that Niebuhr is never concerned about pure and correct doctrine for its own sake but only about a doctrine in which the reality of man's life in his relatedness to God and man is revealed." (p. 142) This, perhaps, explains why, when on rare occasions Niebuhr does discuss a point of doctrine, the Catholic reader finds himself in complete disagreement, whereas his exposition of the relatedness of God and man, and man and man, is extremely enlightening.

An example of this is Niebuhr's doctrine on sin, which Hans Hoffman rightly sees as central to the whole of his work. Niebuhr's conception of original sin is oversimplified and not in accord with the very text it is based on. The following is a quotation from *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (quoted by Hoffman, p. 164): "Adam was sinless before he acted and sinful in his first recorded action. His sinlessness, in other words, preceded his first significant action and his sinfulness came to light in that action." While the first chapters of Genesis do give the impression that Adam's sin came a short time after his production, it also definitely suggests that he has begun to live a life of innocence in the garden. He had manifested his authority over the animals by naming them; he had accepted his wife as a help-mate; and the walk God took the evening of the fall is not presented as a unique event. One might wonder, too, whether Niebuhr would consider a newborn child sinless until he had grown enough to act deliberately; and then how explain the insistence of the Church on baptizing infants? On the other hand, Niebuhr's analysis of actual sin and its place in human life might almost be a commentary on these words of St. Vincent de Paul to his companions: "In the holiest deed of a preacher of the Gospel one is sure to find that for the most part he either behaved badly in the way he performed them, or often enough in the intention; and, in fact, if he does not wish to flatter himself, he will recognize himself as the worst of men."

Hans Hoffman has given a clear introduction to what is most valuable in the contribution of Reinhold Niebuhr, whose view of theology might be characterized in the words Melville uses to describe Father Mapple's pulpit: "What could be more full of meaning? for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world. . . . Yes, the world's a ship on its passage on, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow."

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BRIEF NOTICES

Tractatus de Verbo Incarnato. By BARTHOLO M. XIBERTA, O. Carm. 2 Vols. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1954. Pp. 766.

Many years of research and writing by a distinguished Professor of Theology at the Carmelite College in Rome have culminated in this extensive treatise on the Incarnation. It is not, like so many others, a commentary on St. Thomas' treatise on the same question, although it does follow his order in a general way and makes reference to the parallel questions of the *Summa*. Nor is it a theological manual. It is rather an independent work which, in line with previous studies by the author, gives major emphasis to the formal constitutive notion and the functions of supposit and nature in the hypostatic union.

The division of the work is the customary one of Christology and Soteriology. In the first there is a detailed examination of the constitution of Christ from both the positive and speculative sides. The remaining two-thirds of the first section is devoted to a consideration of the *consectaria humanitatis*, the mode of union, the properties of Christ's humanity, grace, knowledge, power and others. The Soteriology discusses the Redemption in three parts: first, the mysteries of Christ's actual life from His conception to His ascension; second, the work of Redemption itself; and finally the various offices of Christ as teacher, priest, king, mediator, head of the mystical body. The work concludes with a supplement on the fittingness and the motive of the Incarnation.

The principal contribution this work makes to theology is its exhaustive study of the question on which it places heaviest emphasis, the question on which the author has been writing articles since the thirties, the constitution of Christ. The author's sustained interest in this problem is evident from his early articles on the nature and *suppositum* in Christ down to his recent work *El Yo di Cristo*. Xiberta's view is that St. Thomas, in his defense and explanation of the hypostatic union, insisted on the unity of Christ, but did not specifically consider what formally constitutes the supposit. This was the work of later medieval theologians and even now modern theologians, among whom must be included Xiberta himself, are attempting to answer the more complex problems about the *constitutivum formale* of the supposit. More than the question of simple definition is involved. What answers are to be given these questions? What is the full content of the "I" in Christ? How was the human intellect conscious of

the divinity in the one Christ? More than psychological difficulties, these questions presuppose some definite conclusions about the ontological unity of Christ. Hence, the analysis of the influence of the Word on the assumed humanity, making it the Word's own human nature, yet preserving it distinct from the divine nature, is the basic problem to be solved in the consideration of the ontological constitution of Christ.

Xiberta thinks the more complex points about the hypostatic union will be explained if the definition of *supposit* proposed by an English Carmelite, John Baconthorpe, in the fourteenth century is followed. This definition is: "*ratio formaliter constitutiva suppositi concipitur tamquam plena actuatio naturae substantialis se habens tamquam effectus formalis secundarius in actuatione ipsius naturae substantialis.*" Of the explanations of Cajetan and Suarez, the present author says: "Whatever philosophical value they may have, their usefulness is found wanting in the present theological question; in fact, they do not explain what subsistence is, but only indicate what accompanies subsistence." (p. 267) Yet Xiberta does not seem to advert to the fact that Baconthorpe's notion of *supposit* is but one part of his entire system, a system which disagrees not only with the later work of Cajetan and Suarez, but with the basic philosophical doctrines of St. Thomas. Nor does Xiberta see that this disagreement might involve much more fundamental problems for the whole treatise on the Incarnation.

The most evident shortcoming of this work, however, is the unusual order it follows. Important questions like the fittingness and the motivation of the Incarnation, which should be introductory, are treated in a supplement. And the supplement is curiously entitled: "The Incarnation seen under the light of human reason." The headship of Christ is considered after the redemption, not in its proper place under the grace of Christ. And the fundamental point of the redemption, that Christ can merit *for us* in His passion, is simply established by a brief quotation from St. Thomas. (III, q. 48, a. 1) Other subjects, such as the priesthood and mediation of Christ, which to be understood theologically must be seen as following from the hypostatic union, are rather treated after the redemption. Again, after treating the passion and death of Christ, the author discusses the redemption as if this were a static abstraction apart from the acts of Christ. Such an order inevitably leads to much repetition as well as misunderstanding; the matter on the constitution of Christ, for instance, is treated three times on the positive and three times on the theological level.

Father Xiberta's vast reading and thorough knowledge of the historical and theological background of his subject, nevertheless, is evident throughout the volumes. An excellent feature is a seventy-page annotated bibliography, perhaps the most complete on the subject yet to appear. This

work, then, can only be described as solid. Whether it calls forth agreement or disagreement, it must be taken into account in any future discussions of the hypostatic union.

The Meaning of Love. By ROBERT O. JOHANN, S. J. Westminster: Newman, 1955. Pp. 141. \$4.00.

Of the many books on the subject of love, by Thomistic authors, this volume is distinctive in its aim of enriching traditional teaching by the insights of modern philosophy. Fr. Johann feels that the purely "objective" study of love, as found in St. Thomas and his followers, is not adequate, in that it fails to take sufficient account of the necessary aspects of "subjectivity" and "interiority." At the same time, the author believes that such modern thinkers as Madinier, Nédoncelle, and Marcel fail to give an adequate metaphysical doctrine of love, although they have gone far in the analysis of "intersubjectivity." Fr. Johann states: "The key to understanding love lies, we think, in a synthesis of Thomist thought, as furnishing the metaphysical framework for a philosophy of intersubjectivity, with the insights of contemporaries into the mystery of intersubjectivity." (p. 9)

The first chapter deals with the realism of love as found in the two basic forms of love: desire (*amor concupiscentiae*) and direct love (*amor benevolentiae, amicitiae*). The author asserts—and this is one of his basic points—that desire regards its object as a *res*, being in its essential aspects, while direct love sees its object precisely as *ens*, being in its incommunicable, individual, existential aspect. The explicit Thomistic doctrine on this point is that desire sees its object as "accidental" and direct love treats its object as "substance" or "subsisting." This reader has not been convinced that the distinction made by Fr. Johann is a proper interpretation of Thomist teaching, nor that the distinction of *res* and *ens*, of *ta*leity and *ipseity*, is sufficient to separate the two forms of love. It is quite true that direct love regards the person as such, in his individual subsistence, but the distinction made by the author seems to strain the distinction between essence and existence. What is needed is an investigation into the nature of the will, and also into the nature of goodness before such a distinction as that proposed would be acceptable.

A chapter of particular importance is Chapter Three—"I and Thou." It is here that the author, making use of the insights of contemporary philosophers, emphasizes the strictly personal nature of true love and friendship. The need of "presence," of conscious grasping of self as a person, and of others as subsisting persons is seen as the condition for establishing any true bonds of love. This love will, then, consist in a true "communion"

of persons, not a relationship based on mutual advantages, or even abstract ideals and values—for this would be a relation between the “I” and the “He.” True love is a communion established between individuals who see and grasp both themselves and the other in their individual subsistence, as persons—it is a relation between “I” and “Thou.”

It is here that Fr. Johann has stressed the point of greatest importance, and the Thomistic thinker is grateful to have this essential aspect of true love given its proper due. The philosophical explanation of this fact is more difficult. Any real intellectual penetration of reality involves what Fr. Johann calls, in criticism of St. Thomas, an “objectification of the existential.” (p. 54) This volume has done the great service of showing what direction a philosophy of love must take, in order to satisfy the needs of truth and the special needs of modern thought. We may express the hope that the author will continue his work, and will devote particular attention to the metaphysical justification and explanation of the forms of love, divided on the basis of essential and existential aspects.

Saint Joseph. By HENRI RONDET, S. J. Translated and edited by Donald Attwater. New York: Kenedy, 1956. Pp. 253. \$4.00.

“St. Joseph is still not properly known and understood. Devotion to him is widespread and enthusiastic, and there is a very large number of books that seek to minister to this devotion. But too often these writings are lacking in the spirit of critical scholarship or in theological competence, and one result of this is that others among the faithful are ‘put off’ this devotion, dear to the Church though it be. The aim of this book is to put St. Joseph’s place in the economy of salvation before both classes of the faithful.” (p. i)

Fr. Rondet admirably accomplishes his aim in this work which has two main parts. The first appeared as an article in the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* in 1953. It contains a brief historical summary of the doctrine concerning St. Joseph as seen from the Gospels, apocrypha and religious writings through the centuries, as well as in recent liturgical developments; it concludes with a short essay on the theology of St. Joseph. The second part consists of a number of extracts from writings and sermons about St. Joseph, from St. John Chrysostom and St. Bernard in the early ages, through St. Alphonsus and Bossuet, to such moderns as Canon O’Shea and Fr. Sutcliffe. Of the twenty seven selections in the second part, twenty are substitutions made by the editor, Donald Attwater.

There is no doubt that this book will appeal to preachers, since it contains many excellent texts on the various aspects of the great saint. Especially noteworthy is St. Teresa’s famous eulogy of St. Joseph, which is

given in its context. Fr. Coleridge writes well on the scriptural aspects; and Fr. O'Carroll does much to bring St. Joseph back to life as a real human being in love with his wife. Some paragraphs from Bishop Bossuet's two excellent sermons could also bear repetition from our pulpits.

But Saint Joseph deserves some consideration from theologians. Most of those who treat of Mary's husband agree that he is the greatest of all the saints after Mary herself. Is this correct? We cannot appeal to St. Thomas for a direct answer, for he never did treat of the order of dignity among the saints. He did, nevertheless, lay down a principle, that when God chooses someone for a particular duty, he gives that person the graces necessary to fit him for that office. St. Bernardine is generally credited with developing and applying this principle to St. Joseph, to conclude that he is the greatest after Mary. Several other authors mentioned in this work, notably St. Alphonsus, indicate they also believe there is no man greater. There is a celebrated difficulty from the text of Matt. 11:11 with regard to St. John the Baptist. Fr. Rondet does not solve this apparent difficulty, yet it would seem that he could have appealed to Luke 7:28 to show that John the Baptist is the greatest of the prophets, but St. Joseph is greater than all the prophets.

Another point for theological consideration is the possibility of St. Joseph's bodily assumption. St. Thomas certainly allowed the possibility of many bodily assumptions. St. Francis de Sales said "we ought not to doubt that this glorious saint was so esteemed by Him who had so blessed him that He raised him to Heaven body and soul." (p. 92) Mary's Immaculate Conception was defined as a unique privilege, but her Assumption was not so defined.

There remains, however, one rather important problem that deserves more attention: what was St. Joseph's role, if any, in our Lord's advance in wisdom? Fr. Rondet refers to St. Joseph as "teacher of the Son of God," and he says that St. Joseph "educated Jesus." (p. 44) It seems to this writer that such statements would be better avoided, or at least carefully clarified. St. Thomas is quite explicit in his teaching that it is theologically unfitting to say that the Son of God learned anything from men (cf. III, q. 12, a. 3). To be sure, not much has been written on this in recent works on St. Joseph. Fr. Lagrange, whom Fr. Rondet cites, wrote of Mary's part, but only in general terms.

Mr. Attwater gives a fine modern English translation of Pope Leo's prayer to St. Joseph, but the other prayers retain the archaic "thee" and "thou." Sometimes he uses the original titles of foreign books and at other times he gives the English equivalent. The same unevenness is found with regard to names. There is no index, but there is a selected bibliography.

Devotion to St. Joseph is increasing along with that of Mary. True devotion must be based on solid doctrine. Fr. Rondet's *Saint Joseph* will certainly aid true devotion.

A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology. By WILLIAM HORDERN. New York: Macmillan, 1955. Pp. 215 with index. \$3.50.

Within the past decade, the attention of Catholic theologians has increasingly been brought to bear on the Protestant scene. This has been due both to the tremendous number of scholarly books being published by Protestant thinkers, and to the amount of space given in most of our foremost national magazines to the views of these men as well as to serious evaluations made by these reviews of the ferments at work in modern Protestantism. This renewed and sympathetic interest on the part of these reviews is itself worthy of note, since they are usually so parsimonious in placing their columns at the disposal of any serious discussions on religion.

The Catholic theologian is familiar with the theological positions of the founders of Protestantism, and for the most part he possesses a summary understanding of the theories of the major Protestant thinkers of the last century, since their theories are found listed in capsule form under the *Errores* in our theological manuals. But what of their spiritual offspring, who are shaping the modern Protestant outlook, what is their relation to their forebears? What is the source of their present intellectual appeal? What is the relation of their teaching to that of the Catholic Church? These questions are important to clergy and seminarians, who must be prepared to treat the new problems which current religious theories raise for Catholics who come into contact with them, and for Protestants interested in the Catholic faith. The answer to them will be found largely in this book.

In it, the wide divergence between the doctrines of Catholicism and of the innumerable facets of Protestantism is clearly manifested. For the knowledge of Protestant thought that it makes readily available, the book is of considerable value. It constitutes a rude awakening to those who are prepared to believe that the gap between Catholic and Protestant thought is constantly diminishing. Perhaps this is all to the good, for it is only in terms of a realistic approach to the Protestant mind of the twentieth century that any rapprochement can be achieved.

The book may be logically divided into three sections. The first two chapters, as introductory, setting the stage historically for the modern scene; the seven following chapters, devoted to a study of the various schools of thought in Protestant theology; and the tenth, concluding chapter, an *apologia* for the fundamentally divergent views in Protestant doctrine. The main part of the book, dealing with the delineation of the various Protestant positions, is capably handled. The author is fully conversant with his subject, and with easy readability and precision presents the various attitudes to the Christian message, including his own which he considers the most satisfactory, and which he terms "Orthodoxy as a Growing Tradition."

In the main section of the book the reader discovers the tremendous impact of Modernism on the Protestant Churches and the extent of the progress which radical liberalism has made in them. Here the fundamental weakness of Protestantism in the lack of any central spiritual authority is sharply underlined. "Let him hear the Church" has no meaning, for what is the Church to teach when fundamentalists and liberals fail to agree on the very basic elements of the Christian doctrine.

However, the Catholic theologian recoils in wonder and sorrow at the contents of the first two chapters. To deal adequately with this section would require a book of equal length. The difficulty of reviewing Protestant theological works is accentuated by the fact the Protestants use the same words as do Catholics, but with totally different meanings. "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." Statement after statement consequently leaves the mind uneasy. The terms "orthodoxy," "tradition," "Church," etc., are used ambiguously; the divinity of Christ is not decisively championed; the explanation of the Blessed Trinity is modalistic, the doctrine of original sin is emasculated; the role of the Holy Spirit in the guidance of the Church in purity of truth is omitted, and the explanation of the Church's understanding of the doctrine of Christ has strong overtones of the "community production" theory.

The author has valiantly sought to lead a Protestant layman through the maze of modern Protestant thought. And, conscious of the bewilderment he has caused his reader, he consoles him in the concluding chapter that such contradiction in fundamentals is the way it was all meant to be. The conflicting interpretations of the teaching of Christ "are the very lifeblood of a vital religious life." The differences in Protestantism are not to its shame but to its credit, for the only alternative to this melange is "totalitarian religion," that is, Roman Catholicism. Better any doctrinal aberration than to accept literally the command of Christ to His Church to teach all men "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

A Short History of Philosophy. By F. J. THONNARD, A. A. (tr. by Edward A. Maziarz, C.P.P.S.) New York: Desclee, 1955. Pp. 1084. With indexes. \$6.50.

It seems to this reviewer that the ideal way to conduct a history of philosophy course on the seminary or college level is through a selection of original texts. The students ought to be given the opportunity, and the duty, of reading key philosophical doctrines in the philosophers' own words. Now while this method demands much work of selection on the part of the professor and of assimilation on the part of the student, their

labor is rewarded by a personal familiarity with the writings of the philosophers and a consequent vitality in the critical discussion that follows. No manual can bring these things into a course.

Yet, when the major philosophers of a given historical span are to be covered in a three-hour semester course, it is quite impossible for all of them to be treated through original texts. At the most, seven or eight could be given such full treatment. The student, however, should know something of *all* the philosophers, if he is to be prepared for a comprehensive examination, or even if he is to be literate in the field covered. A dilemma thus arises for the professor: how to conduct a vital course which is at the same time comprehensive? If he uses the original-text method, the teacher guarantees vitality but loses comprehensiveness; if he uses a manual he guarantees comprehensiveness but risks destroying the vitality.

Father Thonnard's book is designed primarily to serve as an introductory manual for ecclesiastical students, though it is aimed also to help college students and interested laity. It covers in its thousand-odd pages all the significant philosophical movements from the Early Ionians to the "Neo-Thomists," from Thales to Maritain. There are good indexes, a table of proper names, another listing all the major doctrines arranged first under doctrinal headings and then alphabetically, and an excellent table of contents covering twenty pages. The translation is clear and idiomatic.

In the context of our previous remarks we observe that such a book, if used as a text in a seminary or college, could very well turn the student forever against philosophy or the history of philosophy. This book is a digest, and in some parts a digest of other earlier digests. It is an excellent digest, to be sure, but we think it would be disastrous to introduce it as a text-book in the history of philosophy.

This is not to deny its usefulness. Father Thonnard's secondary aims for the book—to help college students review for comprehensives and to acquaint the interested laity with some of the philosophical movements in history—these will be more apt to be served than his primary aim. The book is of great assistance also in helping the professor cover the necessary matter when he has paused over the more important figures and given them the fuller treatment required by the textual method. The work of Father Thonnard is a good example of simplification without distortion.

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